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imangascans
rc.rchighway.net

Baby Steps

ベイビーステップ

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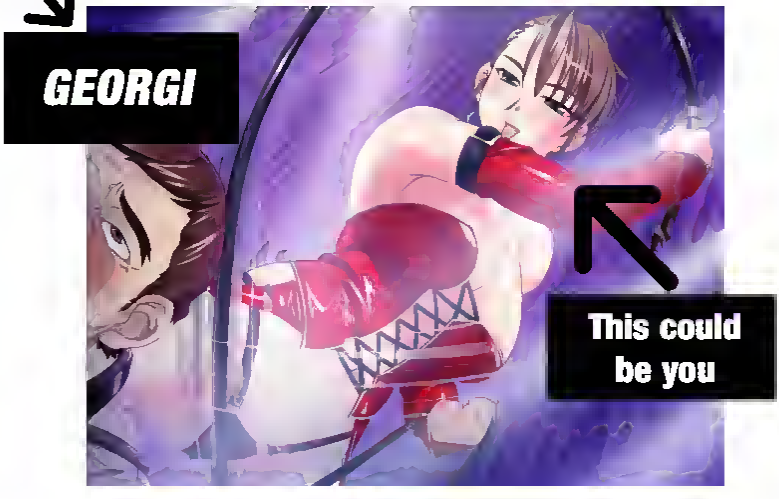
AT IMANGASCANS, WE ARE LOOKING FOR:



Cleaners and redrawers (Mags)
Soul Catcher(S)

Cleaners and redrawers (Tanks)
Last Inning

今回の表紙は、カラーインクでした。
でもこの巻には、あんまり
ナツ出てこないんですよね。
いや‥ むしろ最近描いてないから
描きたいなぁ、という気持ちが
よく表れてるというか‥‥。
はい、自己満足です。

勝木 光

Baby Steps

Baby Steps
ベイビーステップ

23

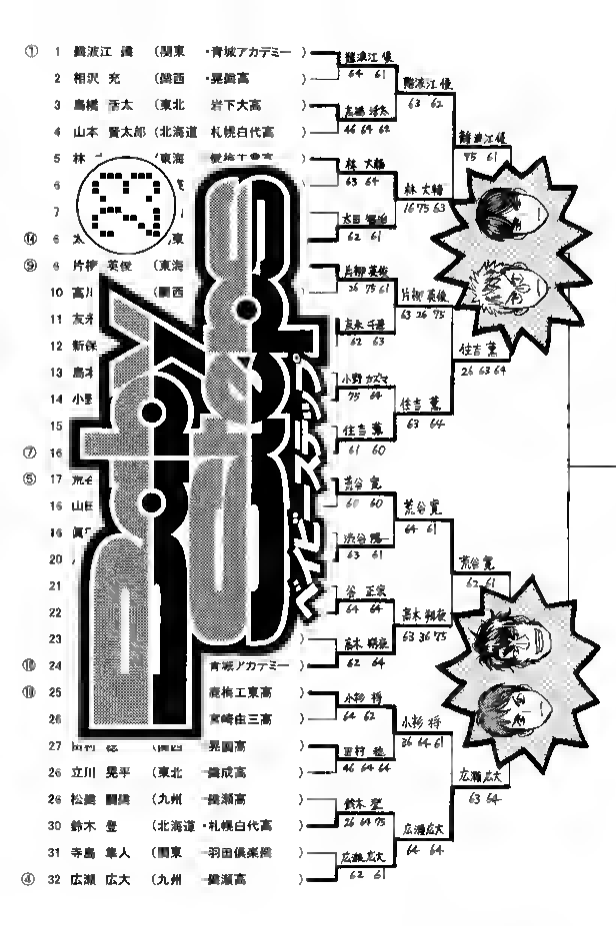
勝木 光

SHONEN MAGAZINE COMICS

Baby Steps ベイビーステップ 23 勝木 光 講談社

SHONEN MAGAZINE COMICS

その懐の深さが強み――!!


ベイビーステップ
ベスト8

① 1 鏑渡江 護 (関東 ・青城アカデミー)
2 相沢 充 (関西 ・晃園高)
3 島崎 圭太 (東北 岩下大高)
4 山本 賢太郎 (北海道 札幌白代高)
⑭ 6 太 (東
⑨ 8 片柳 英俊 (東海
10 高川 (関西
11 友
12 新保
13 島
14 小
15
⑦ 16
⑤ 17 荒
18 山
19 眞
20
21
22
23
⑱ 24 (青城アカデミー)
⑱ 25 (鹿梅工東高)
26 (宮崎由三高)
27 (晃園高)
28 立川 晃平 (東北 鐵成高)
29 松嶋 開瑛 (九州 鐵瀬高)
30 鈴木 豊 (北海道 ・札幌白代高)
31 寺島 隼人 (関東 羽田倶楽部)
④ 32 広瀬 広大 (九州 鐵瀬高)
鏑渡江 護 64 61
鏑渡江 護 63 62
鈴木 豊 46 64 62
林 大輔 63 64
林 大輔 16 75 63
太田 響樹 62 61
片柳 英俊 36 75 61
片柳 英俊 63 36 75
高木 千博 62 63
小野 カズマ 75 64
佳吉 葉 61 60
荒谷 覚 60 60
荒谷 覚 64 61
渋谷 陽一 63 61
谷 正宗 64 64
高木 翔吾 63 36 75
高木 翔吾 62 64
小杉 将 64 62
小杉 将 26 64 61
里村 稔 46 64 64
鈴木 豊 26 64 75
広瀬 広大 64 64
広瀬 広大 62 61
鏑渡江 護 75 61
佳吉 葉 26 63 64
荒谷 覚 62 61
小杉 将 64 64
広瀬 広大 63 64

ベスト8

ベイビーステップ

Baby Step
ベイビーステップ

人物紹介

エーちゃん
丸尾栄一郎

STC所属。「今回の全日本ジュニアで優勝、そしてプロへ」が命題。そこで優勝できなければプロを諦めるという条件付きで、テニス最優先の生活を送っている。同じ夢を持つナツは心の支え。ナツとの交際がテニスに好影響!?

ナツ
鷹崎奈津

STC所属。全国トップレベルの選手でプロ志望。理論派・エーちゃんとは真逆の超感覚派で、それが互いの刺激に。ただいま恋もテニスも絶好調!!

清水亜希

コーチである母親と二人三脚でプロを目指す。ジュニア日本一の選手で、エーちゃんに片思いだが…。

青井コーチ

STCでのエーちゃんのコーチ。元プロ選手という経験に裏付けされた指導でエーちゃんをサポート

佐々木桂子

エーちゃんの試合に必ず駆けつけてくれる心強い応援団。桂子はエーちゃんへの想いを募らす失恋。

彰山小次郎

桂子とエーちゃんの幼い頃からの親友。

親公認カップル

エーちゃん

何てこんなカワイイ娘と!?

全日本も快調！3回戦進出へ!!

全日本ジュニア

各都道府県から勝ち上がった強豪64名が出場。優勝者には、日本のプロが総結集する全日本選手権の出場権が与えられる。

2回戦 第3シード 対 岡田隆行 戦

3時間以上に及ぶ大激戦の末、エーちゃん勝利!!

3回戦 チームメイト 対 深沢諭吉 戦

エーちゃん、ストレート勝ち!

神田久志 / 兼清江優 / 荒谷貴

アニキと戦うのが楽しみだなぁ

迎える4回戦の相手は、ケガから復活 緒方克己!!

3歳からテニスを始めた実力者

何が起こるか予測不能の4回戦、始まる——!!!

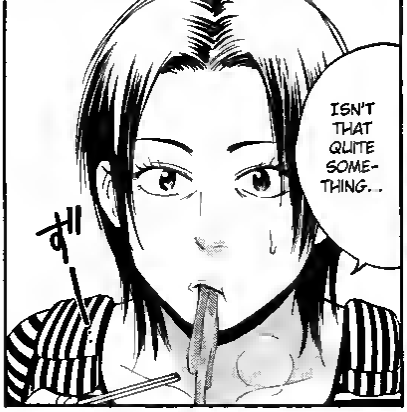
テニス歴3年以下のノーシード

Baby Steps to Giant Strides

CONTENTS

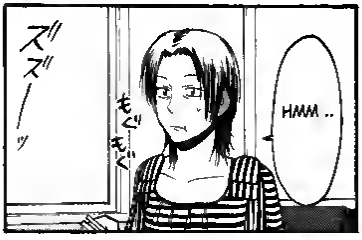
#212 SMILE
#213 FOR FUN
#214 TURNING POINT
#215 RECURSION
#216 ONE POINT BREAKTHROUGH
#217 ACCEPTANCE
#218 IMPORTANT BATTLE
#219 POINT OF IMPROVEMENT
#220 PIN-POINT
#221 CRITICAL POINT

#212 SMILE
ズズー!
ガチャ
カチャ
冷し
きつね
うどん
得正
得正
YOU'RE SO NOSY ON EVERY LITTLE DETAIL...
"TEN" "TEN" "TEN"
YOU'VE GOT SOME CURRY ON YOUR SHIRT
It's going to leave a stain
10
THEES ORREE PRETTY GOOD. NICE CURRY UDON
SFX "SLURP"
WHAT?
...
じっ



あっ!!
ゴホ ゴホ
I-I-I STILL HAVE A LONG WAY TO GO...
I NEED TO BEAT THREE MORE INCREDIBLE PEOPLE IN ORDER TO WIN...
THERE ARE PLENTY OF PEOPLE ABOVE ME, SO I STILL HAVE MY DOUBTS...

SFX *VIBRATION*



Thank you for the meal
GIVE ME A FEW MINUTES.
OH... IT'S YOUR FATHER.
HELLO? YUP, I'M HAVING DINNER WITH EIICHIROU.
MY MOM HAS PRAISED ME ABOUT TENNIS.
BUT THAT WAS THE FIRST TIME...
WELCOME

OH, IT'S MARUO!
ARAYA-KUN.
... AND OGATA-KUN AND SUMIYOSHI-KUN?!

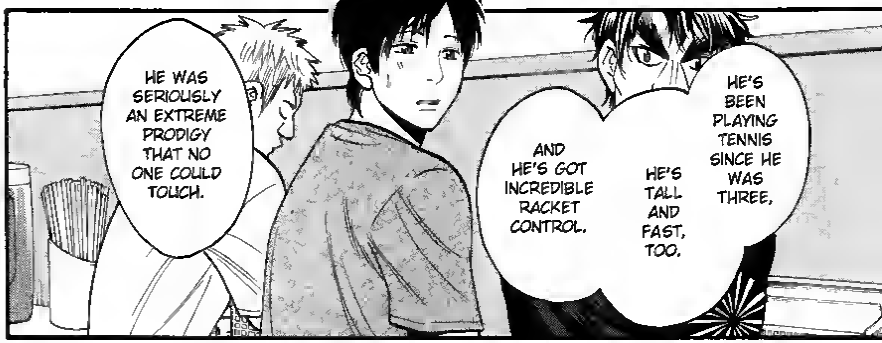
N-NOT AT ALL!
CURRY UDON DATE AFTER YOUR MATCH?
WHAT A COINCI-DENCE.
YOU CHOSE THE RIGHT PLACE! THIS PLACE HAS EXCELLENT CURRY UDON.

THIS IS YOUR FIRST TIME MEETING OGATA, RIGHT?
FINE FINE. BY THE WAY, WE WERE JUST TALKING ABOUT YOU.
SINCE HE IS YOUR NEXT OPPONENT.
てれっ
HI, I'M OGATA KATSUMI.
AH... YES! NICE TO MEET YOU, I'M MARUO EIICHIROU.
ARAYA-KUN SURE KNOWS A LOT OF PEOPLE...
Same
Curry Udon
HEY~ THIS IS SUMIYOSHI KAORU!
HELLO

I SAW THE MATCH, TOO.
YEAH, AT THE INTER-HIGH..

I TOLD YOU BEFORE, RIGHT? THAT OGATA WAS AN EVER GREATER PRODIGY THAN THAT IKE SOUJI.
カル

SERIOUSLY, THIS GUY WAS AMAZING BACK WHEN WE WERE KIDS.


HE WAS SERIOUSLY AN EXTREME PRODIGY THAT NO ONE COULD TOUCH.
AND HE'S GOT INCREDIBLE RACKET CONTROL.
HE'S TALL AND FAST, TOO.
HE'S BEEN PLAYING TENNIS SINCE HE WAS THREE,

NO, I'M NOT.
NO NO, OGATA IT'S ALL PAST TENSE
HE'S MAKING FUN OF YOU...
THAT'S SO FLATTERING, ARAYA...

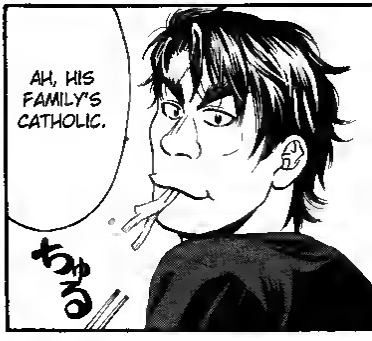
IF THAT DIDN'T HAPPEN I BET YOU WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN STUCK IN THIS PLACE RIGHT NOW.
REALLY? BUT IT'S AMAZING HOW YOU MANAGED TO GET BACK TO SHAPE IN JUST ONE YEAR.
IT WAS MY HIP, NOT KNEE. IT WAS ALSO DURING MY FIRST YEAR IN MIDDLE SCHOOL.
BUT HE INJURED HIS KNEE IN GRADE SCHOOL AND COULDN'T PLAY TENNIS FOR THREE YEARS.
WOW... SO YOU OVERCAME SUCH A GRAVE INJURY...
HE IS MY ETERNAL ENEMY!
ARAYA, ARE YOU STILL BITTER ABOUT TAKUMA-KUN?
I BET YOU'D HAVE GONE TO NATIONALS AND TRAVELED ALL AROUND THE WORLD MUCH QUICKER THAN TAKUMA
!?
BUT IT WASN'T ALL BAD. THERE WERE SOME GOOD THINGS, TOO.
I'M STILL IN THE PROCESS.

HERE IT IS! LET'S DIG IN, GUYS!!
THANK YOU FOR THE MEAL!

HERE! THREE CURRY UDONS!
ゴトッ

スッ
スッ

THANK YOU FOR THE MEAL~
HMM—
TEN' EIGHTEEN'


AH, HIS FAMILY'S CATHOLIC.
ちゅる

W-WHAT WAS GOOD ABOUT GETTING INJURED?
U-UMM... OGATA-KUN...
HUH?
FU-HO-HEE-FUI-FAH-HOO!~
もご
もご
もご
UMM... HMM..... LET'S SEE, I LEARNED A LOT OF THINGS...
AH.. IT'S HOT..
OGATA, DON'T TALK WITH YOUR MOUTH FULL.
I WAS ABLE TO MEET A REALLY GOOD MEDICAL TRAINER,
AND I GOT MORE BALANCED THANKS TO ALL THE MUSCLE TRAINING I DID WHILE I COULDN'T PLAY TENNIS.
AND MOST IMPORTANTLY, I THINK I GOT MENTALLY STRONGER.

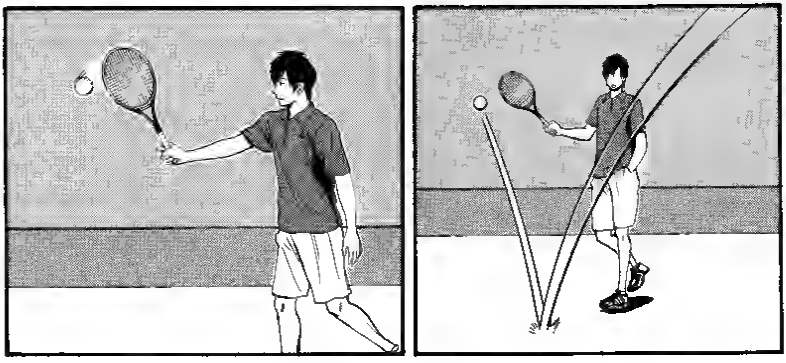
HEY HEY, DON'T SCARE HIM TOO MUCH.
THAT'S NOT MY INTENTION.
ゴクッ
TEN 10
FIFTEEN 15
SFX: "GULP"

BUT MARUO'S INCREDIBLE, TOO
UNLIKE YOU, HE NEVER HELD A RACKET UNTIL HIGH SCHOOL, YET HE MANAGED TO BEAT OKADA IN THE NATIONALS
Isn't that a bit annoying?
YEAH, IT'S UNBELIEVABLE.

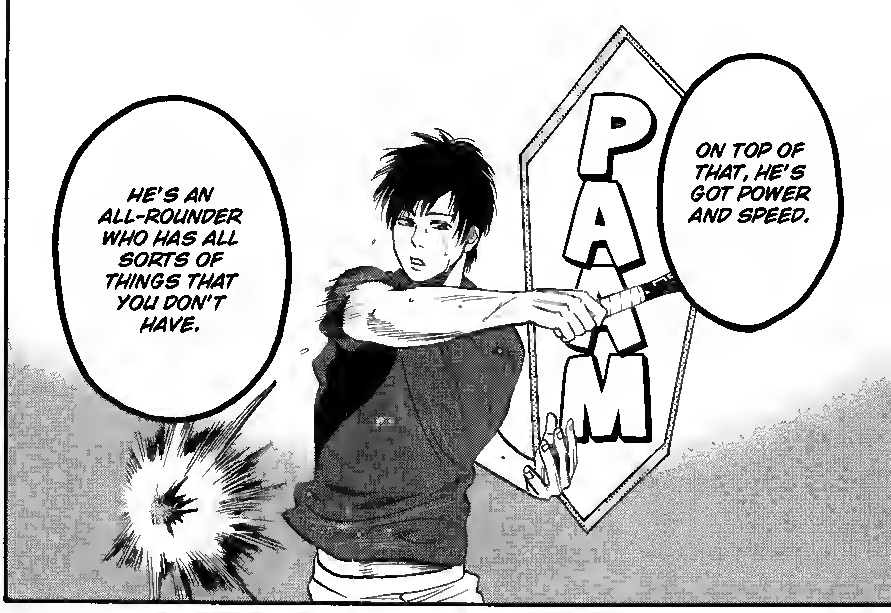
ANYWAYS, I'M REALLY LOOKING FORWARD TO YOUR MATCH.

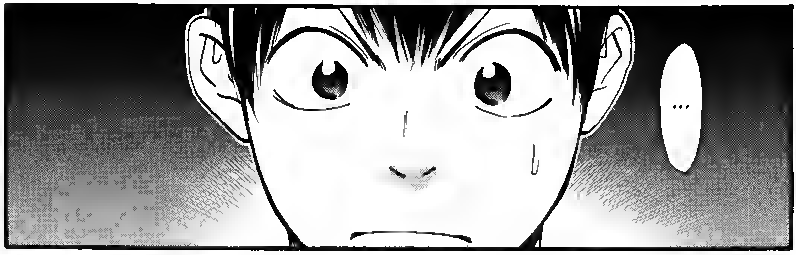
AH, HELLO YOUR FRIENDS?
NICE TO MEET YOU.
THANK YOU FOR HELPING OUT EIICHIROU
HUH? NEXT OPPO-NENT?
EIICHIROU, YOUR DAD SAYS HE CAN COME TOMORROW.
AH MOM.

POK
POK
... IT FEELS LIKE OGATA HAS BEEN DOING IT SINCE CHILDHOOD
SEE? YOU CAN TELL FROM THE HANDLING OF THE RACKET.
30 | 0
WATCH CAREFULLY HOW HE RECEIVES THE BALL.
SONY



THE WAY HE CAN USE HIS RACKET LIKE IT'S PART OF HIS HAND IS PROOF THAT HE'S BEEN PLAYING TENNIS SINCE HE WAS YOUNG.
IT'S THE SAME FOR TAKUMA-SAN... AND IWASA-KUN, TOO...
スッ
ビュッ
ビュッ
IF YOU HAVE THIS, IT'S POSSIBLE TO WAIT UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE TO CHANGE YOUR AIM OR THE SPIN
IT'S LIKE A STRONG BOND WITH THE BALL AND RACKET.
THERE'S THIS INSTINCT THAT YOU CAN'T ACQUIRE UNLESS YOU START BEFORE EARLY GRADE SCHOOL.
BUT IT'S SORT OF AN INSTINCT, SO YOU REALLY CAN'T ANALYZE IT.
ALTHOUGH OGATA HAS AN ORTHODOX STYLE, THIS IS WHERE HE BECOMES DIFFERENT THAN THE OTHERS.


PAIM
HE'S AN ALL-ROUNDER WHO HAS ALL SORTS OF THINGS THAT YOU DON'T HAVE.
ON TOP OF THAT, HE'S GOT POWER AND SPEED.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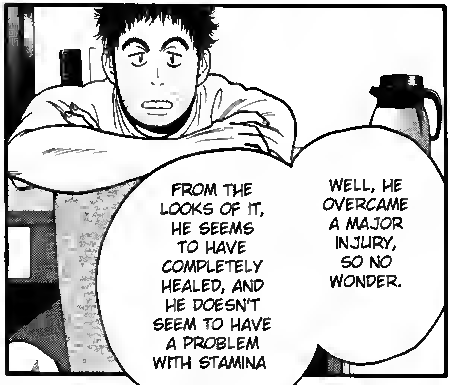
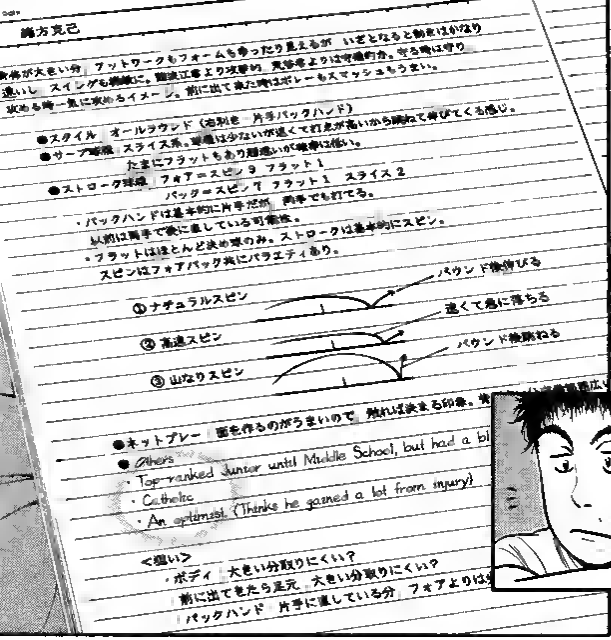
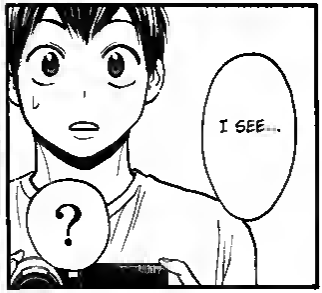

FROM THE LOOKS OF IT, HE SEEMS TO HAVE COMPLETELY HEALED, AND HE DOESN'T SEEM TO HAVE A PROBLEM WITH STAMINA
WELL, HE OVERCAME A MAJOR INJURY, SO NO WONDER.

I THINK HE'S MENTALLY STRONG AS WELL.
ACTUALLY, I MET OGATA-KUN AND TALKED TO HIM FOR A BIT...


峰方克己
●スタイル　オールラウンド（相別を　片手バックハンド）
●サーブ種類　スライス系。種類は少ないが速くて打点が高いから瞬時で伸びてくる感じ。
●ストローク種類　フォアースピン３　フラット１　スライス２
バックースピン１　フラット１
・バックハンドは基本的に片手だが　両手でも打てる。
・フラットはほとんど決め球のみ。ストロークは基本的にスピン。
スピンはフォアバック共にバラエティあり。
①ナチュラルスピン
②高速スピン
③山なりスピン
バウンド後伸びる
速くて急に落ちる
バウンド後跳ねる
●ネットプレー　面を作るのがうまいので　触れば決まる印象。
● Others
・Top-ranked Junior until Middle School, but had a bl
・Catholic
・An optimist (Thinks he gained a lot from injury)
<狙い>
・ボディ　大きい分取りにくい？
前に出てきたら走元　大きい分取りにくい？
・バックハンド　片手に直している分　フォアよりは
THERE'S NO QUESTION HE'S INCREDIBLE CONSIDERING IT'S ONLY BEEN ONE YEAR SINCE HE STARTED PLAYING AGAIN.
I CAN SEE WHY HE WAS CONSIDERED IKE'S EQUAL.

YOU END UP MEETING PLAYERS OF ALL RELIGIONS WHEN YOU PLAY INTERNATIONALLY
IN MY EXPERIENCE, THERE WERE TIMES WHEN I FELT JEALOUS OF PLAYERS WHO CAN BELIEVE IN SOMETHING OTHER THAN THEMSELVES ON THE COURT.
IF YOU CAN ENTRUST ALL YOUR HESITATIONS TO SOMETHING AND ACCEPT THE CONSEQUENCES... IT CAN EMPOWER YOU.

AH, YES. IT SEEMS SO..
HMM... A CATHOLIC HUH.


I SEE...
?

IT'S DEFINITELY GOING TO BE ONE HELL OF A MATCH.
YES
SOMETHING YOU CAN BELIEVE IN OTHER THAN YOURSELF...
TEN
ALL-JAPAN JUNIOR COMPETITION.
DAY 4.
OHH... EIICHIROU'S PLAYING HERE?
YOU LOOK PRETTY EXCITED.
ザワ
ザワ
ザワ

It is 10 AM now.
All players, please begin warming up at your designated court.
I'VE BEEN LEARNING THE RULES OF TENNIS
WANNA LOOK?
SURE
OH, THERE HE IS!
I PROBABLY SHOULDN'T RELY TOO MUCH ON MY DATA...

I'LL JUST BE MYSELF AND PLAY WITH EVERYTHING I GOT!
I CAN'T PREDICT WHAT WILL HAPPEN...
BUT... THAT HAS ALWAYS BEEN THE CASE...

Five years ago
All-Japan Middle School Tennis Competition
Semi-Finals
OHHH! THAT WAS AN INCREDIBLE SHOT!
HE WASN'T SEEDED, YET HE CAME THIS FAR WITHOUT LOSING A SINGLE SET.
THAT GUY FINALLY SHOWED HIS TRUE STRENGTH.
HA!
Ike
Souji
Age 13. (STC)
BUT EVEN THOUGH HE WAS ABLE TO COME THIS FAR

#213 FOR FUN

OGATA HAS ALWAYS BEEN A STEP ABOVE IN THIS GENERATION
Ogata Katsumi
Age 13. (Ryuusei TC)
NOT ONLY IS HE BLESSED WITH STRENGTH, BUT HE'S GOT SPEED, TOO.

AND LOOK AT THAT RACKET CONTROL...
WHOA, HOW DO YOU EVEN HIT LIKE THAT WITH THAT POSTURE?
He's only in 7th grade.
THIS GENERATION IS AN INCREDIBLE GOLDEN AGE.

YOU CAN REALLY SEE THEM BECOME A GENERATION THAT WILL CHALLENGE THE WORLD.
IF THEY COMPETE WITH EACH OTHER, THEY'LL LEVEL UP EVEN MORE.
SORRY... MY GIRLFRIEND CAME TO CHEER TODAY, SO WE'LL BE GOING ON A DATE
DON'T CALL HER A "THING".
Don't go saying weird things!!
D-DO THAT SOME OTHER TIME!!
Backlund, you have a girlfriend?!
OGATA, STOP RIGHT THERE!
1 2 3
OGATA KATSUMI 6 1 7
IKE SOUJI 4 6 5
YOU'VE GOT TIME, RIGHT?! LET'S PLAY ONE MORE SET!!!

SHE TRAVELED ALL THE WAY HERE TO CHEER FOR ME.
THAT'S WHY I'M GOING TO TEACH HER HOW TO FISH. IT'S MY SPECIALTY.
SHE'S NOT GOOD AT SPORTS, BUT FISHING IS SOMETHING WE CAN DO TOGETHER.
WE'LL ALSO BE GOING TO AN ART MUSEUM RIGHT AFTER THE MATCH TOMORROW... AND SINCE I'LL BE TRAINING AFTER THAT...
JUST COME TO OUR COURT AT AROUND 9 PM.
YOU... A-ARE YOU LOOKING DOWN ON TENNIS!?
I'M SO PISSED THAT I LOST TO A GUY LIKE YOU!!
WHAT ARE YOU SAYING? I'M DOING MY BEST!
YOU BAS-TARD...
LOOKS LIKE IKE'S STILL NO MATCH FOR OGATA-KUN.
AH, STC'S COACH MIURA.
BUT IKE-KUN HAS BEEN CLOSING THE GAP REALLY QUICKLY, SO KATSUMI NEEDS TO WORK EVEN HARDER...
BUT IT SEEMS LIKE OGATA-KUN WILL BE EVEN MORE INCREDIBLE IF HE WERE TO CONCENTRATE MORE ON TENNIS...

WELL, I THOUGHT THE SAME THING AT FIRST, BUT I STARTED FEELING THAT IT'S OKAY THESE DAYS.
HIS DIVERSITY AND FLEXIBILITY ARE PART OF HIS STRENGTHS.

YOU'RE GOING DOWN TOMORROW!
DON'T BE SO MAD...

A COUPLE OF WEEKS LATER...

Kodan General Hospital

AH... IKE-KUN.
ハア
ハア
WHAT DO YOU MEAN "I MESSED UP..."?! ARE YOU OKAY?!
HAHAHA, YOU HEARD? I MESSED UP.
TWO YEARS..
ARE YOU SERIOUS?
I WON'T BE ABLE TO PLAY FOR AT LEAST TWO YEARS.
MY KNEE WASN'T FEELING WELL THESE DAYS,
BUT IT WAS MY HIP...

ARGH〰 I DON'T WANNA GO THROUGH REHAB...
YOU DON'T WANT TO?
... BUT YOU CAN STILL PLAY A BIT AS YOU REHAB, RIGHT?
THERE'S NO WAY AN AMAZING GUY LIKE YOU CAN'T PLAY TENNIS...
NOPE I MIGHT NOT GET TO HOLD A RACKET FOR ALMOST TWO YEARS
HOW... HOW CAN YOU SAY.. SUCH THINGS SO EASILY...?
I SEE... I GOT IT.
IT CAN'T BE HELPED, HUH.
THEN I'M GOING...

HEY, IKE-KUN.
I'LL BE FINE, SO DON'T WORRY.
I LOVE TENNIS.
SO WE'LL DEFINITELY PLAY AGAIN.

IT'S GOING TO BE A TOUGH HURDLE...
BUT I'LL OVERCOME IT.
I THINK I'LL GET EVEN STRONGER IF I DO THAT.
I THINK I'LL BE ABLE TO GO EVEN HIGHER THAN I WOULD HAVE UNDER NORMAL CIRCUMSTANCES...
HMPH.
I'LL GO AHEAD TO A PLACE WHERE YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO REACH.
SO YOU CAN GET A HEAD START.
GOOD LUCK WITH THE REHAB.
THANKS.

THAT REHAB WOULD BE THIS HARD...
I NEVER IMAGINED...
BUT AS I WENT THROUGH THIS...
TENNIS BECAME SO DEAR FOR ME...
I'D LOVE TENNIS SO MUCH...
AND I NEVER KNEW...

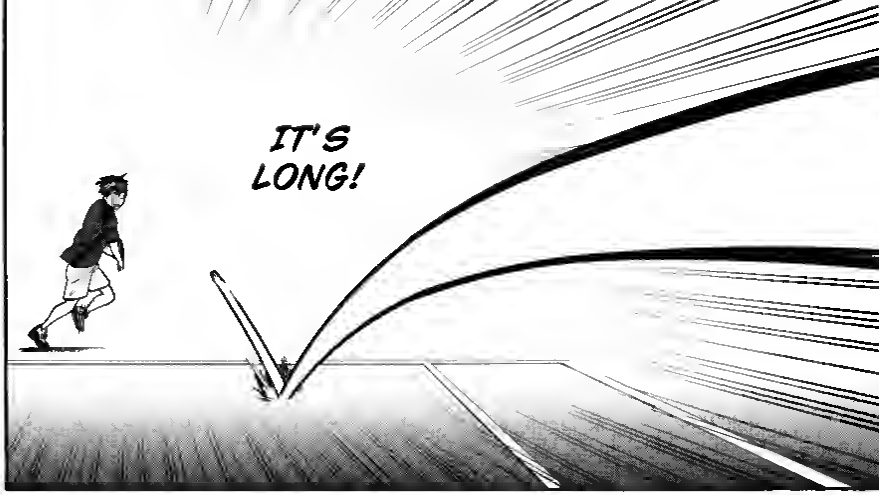
THANK YOU SO MUCH.
I CAN PLAY TENNIS TODAY AGAIN...

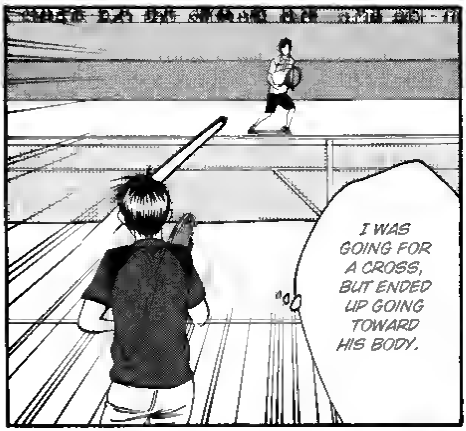
WE WILL START THE FOURTH ROUND OF ALL-JAPAN JUNIOR TENNIS COMPETITION.
THE BEST OF THREE SET MATCH.

OGATA-KUN'S STYLE IS ORTHODOX.
FIRST, ADJUST THE SLIGHT DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MY DATA AND REAL LIFE
BUT SINCE HIS STRENGTH IS STILL A BIG MYSTERY, I HAVE TO BE PREPARED TO FACE THE WORST...

MARUO, SERVICE PLAY!
...BUT FIRST OF ALL, MY FIRST SERVE!

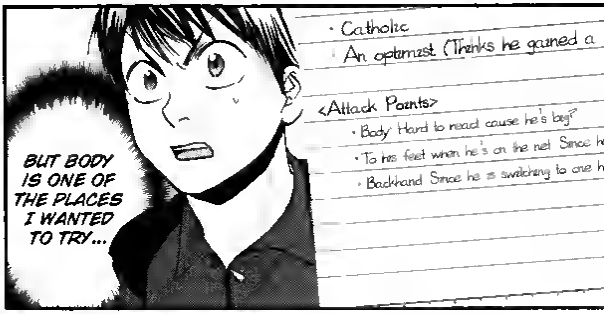
I'LL TAKE HIM OFF GUARD WITH A SLICE THAT CUTS TO THE SIDE!
IT WENT IN NOW RETURN THIS WITH A FLAT CROSS
!!


IT'S LONG!


I WAS GOING FOR A CROSS, BUT ENDED UP GOING TOWARD HIS BODY.

RGH!

LET'S DO THIS!


BUT BODY IS ONE OF THE PLACES I WANTED TO TRY...
• Catholic
• An optimist (Thinks he gained a
<Attack Points>
• Body: Hard to reach cause he's big!
• To his feet when he's on the net. Since h
• Backhand. Since he is switching to one h

... HIS MOVEMENT IS A LOT QUICKER THAN I EXPECTED.
15 - 0.
THAT WAS CLOSE...

THE GAP BETWEEN MY DATA AND REAL-LIFE EXPERIENCE IS A LOT WIDER THAN USUAL...
IF IT WAS HIGHER BY ONE BALL, HE WOULD'VE COMPLETELY MADE IT.

HE GOT TO THIS LEVEL IN LESS THAN THREE YEARS OF TENNIS...

JUST WATCH QUIETLY
SHOULD WE BE MAKING A BIT MORE NOISE?
EIICHIROU GOT A POINT.

PLAYER
I
II
III
MARUO EIICHIROU
0
OGATA KATSUMI
0
DUNLOP
I WONDER WHAT SORT OF THINGS HE HAD TO GO THROUGH...
HE GOT TO THIS LEVEL IN LESS THAN THREE YEARS OF TENNIS...
#214 TURNING POINT
ALTHOUGH HIS PLAY STYLE IS EXACTLY THE SAME FROM LAST TIME, THE QUALITY HAS GONE UP TREMENDOUSLY.
AFTER THAT SHARP SLICE SERVE... A FLAT SERVE TO THE CENTER!

THIS SERVE ISN'T JUST ABOUT AIM AND SPEED ..
THE GAP FROM THE WIDE SLICE SERVE A POINT AGO IS REALLY GOOD TOO...

IT'S AIMED TO A SPOT THAT CAN POTENTIALLY FINISH THE POINT....
IT DOESN'T JUST OFFSET THE TIMING...
IT'S A HIGH ARCHING TOPSPIN, BUT IT'S QUITE STRONG...
THIS IS ALSO MAKING USE OF THAT QUICK ATTACK FROM BEFORE
AH.
HE'S AT THE NET...

30 - 0.
HA
YES!
QUICK ATTACK, SLOW DOWN, AND THEN ANOTHER QUICK ATTACK...

I FEEL LIKE THIS IS SOMETHING YOU CAN'T DO UNLESS YOU'VE HAD A LENGTHY CAREER.
A WELL THOUGHT OUT VARIETY OF SHOTS...
AND THE CONTROL EXECUTE IT.
AND MAKE THIS...
A SHORT CROSS!!

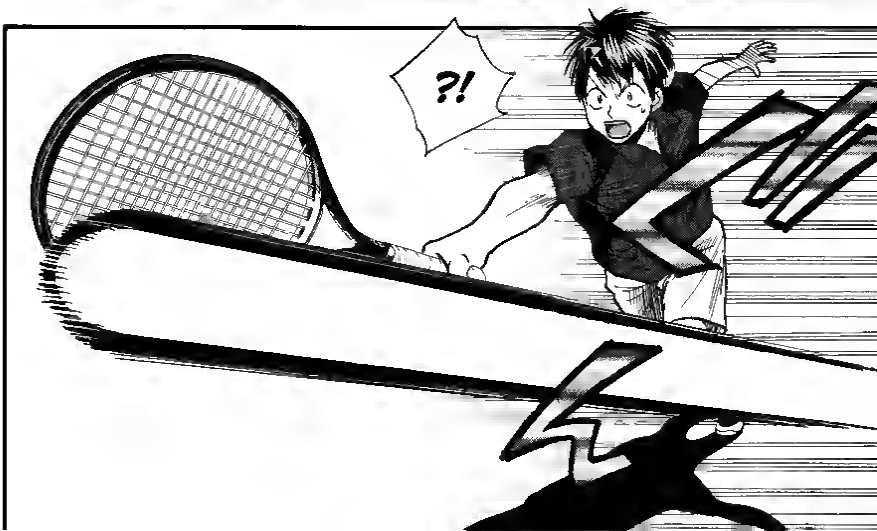
GAME, MARUO. 1 - 0. FIRST SET.
YES.
HEY... ISN'T EIICHIROU PRETTY GOOD?
I STARTED OFF WITH A KEEP!

HE TOOK OUT HIS NOTE-BOOK...
prince
ALTHOUGH I DON'T REALLY KNOW WHAT EXACTLY HE'S DOING...
HIS SCHEDULE IS BASICALLY TENNIS 24/7
EVEN AFTER PRACTICE, HE STUDIES WITH HIS NOTES
THAT'S RIGHT... ARAYA SAID HE'S WITH TENNIS ALL THE TIME...
I COULDN'T IMAGINE WHAT HE MEANT BY DOING TENNIS OUTSIDE THE COURT,
BUT BASICALLY, HE'S BEEN USING THOSE NOTES TO BRAINSTORM DIFFERENT STRATEGIES
IN ORDER TO COMPENSATE FOR HIS LACK OF EXPERIENCE...

OKAY... MY CONDITION'S JUST AS GOOD AS YESTERDAY.
OGATA-KUN'S TENNIS IS INCREDIBLE, BUT THERE'S NOTHING IRREGULAR ABOUT HIS STYLE...
ALTHOUGH HE HAS A LOT OF FIREPOWER, HE USES LOW-RISK SPINS TO ATTACK EFFICIENTLY.
BUT ONE THING IS BOTHERING ME.
IS THAT HIS PLAYS AND THE WAY HE ACTS SEEMS USUALLY LAID-BACK
KEEP THOSE IN MIND AND RAISE THE RISK DURING THE RETURN GAME.
HE SEEMS EMBARASSED WHEN OUR EYES MEET...
I DON'T THINK HE'S FOOLING AROUND, BUT IT FEELS LIKE HE'S NOT CONCENTRATED ON THE MATCH
WELL, THAT'S NOT SOMETHING I NEED TO WORRY ABOUT.

IF IT'S GOING TO BE AN ORTHODOX ATTACK, WHAT WILL HE DO?
HE PROBABLY WANTS TO START BY AVOIDING A DOUBLE FAULT AT ALL COSTS
IF THAT'S THE CASE, HE'LL AIM FOR A LARGE SPACE...

A WIDE SERVE?!!

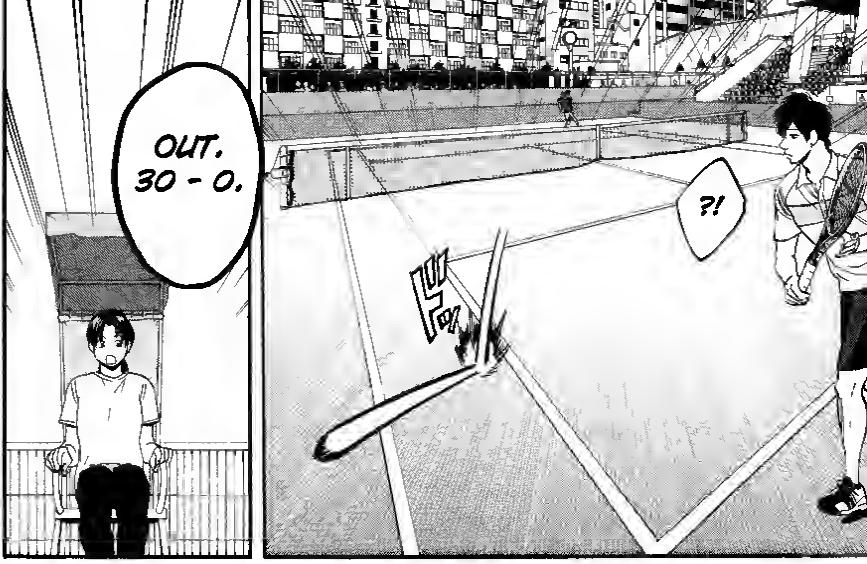

?!

15 - 0.
NO WAY... I COULDN'T REACH IT EVEN THOUGH I READ THE SERVE...?!
WHAT A SERVE... DID HE RAISE IT UP A NOTCH?
IF HE MADE THE FIRST ONE... BACK-TO-BACK WIDE SERVES?!

HUHP BUT IT WAS AN ACE WHEN I HAD A PRETTY SIMILAR SERVE BEFORE...
RGH
... I SOMEHOW RETURNED IT, BUT IT'S A CHANCE BALL.
AND IT CAME IN.

RGH
TO THE OPEN COURT!
HE HITS AN AMAZING SHOT TO AN AMAZING SPOT SO EASILY...
IT CAME BACK AGAIN...
全日本ジュニアテニ
... AND HIS MOVEMENTS ARE MUCH SHARPER THAN WHAT IT WAS DURING HIS RETURN GAME.

全日本ジュニア
I DON'T HAVE TIME TO GO BACK IF I RETURN THIS NORMALLY...
IF THAT'S THE CASE... ALL OR NOTHING!


OUT. 30 - 0.
?!

NO GOOD. DAMNIT, WHAT A SHOT.

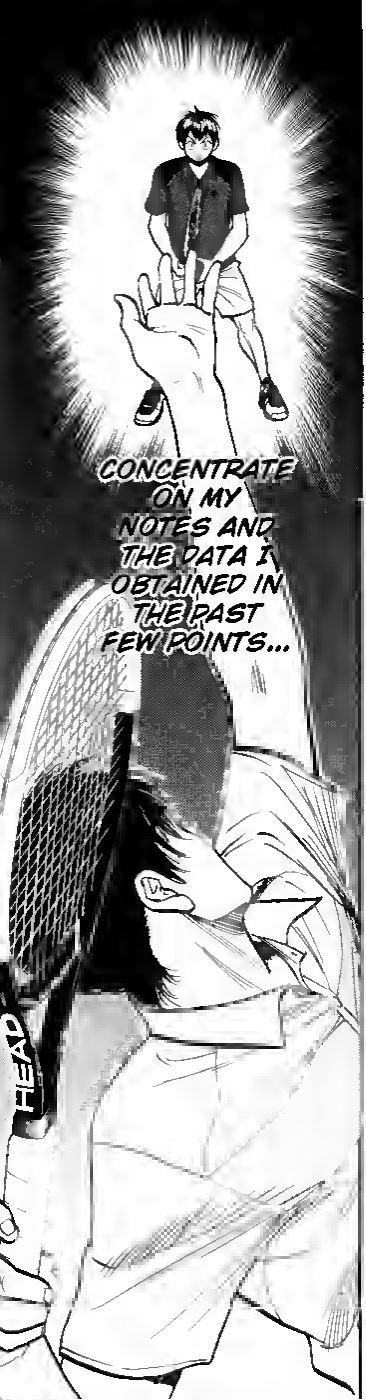
THE OPPONENT LOOKS STRONG TOO
ARGH~ SO CLOSE!

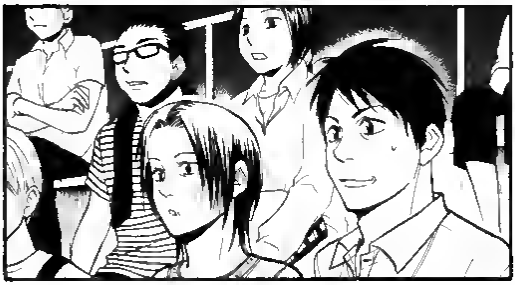
JUST LIKE NABAE-KUN, HE TAKES HIS SERVICE GAME WITH ABSOLUTE CERTAINTY....
ワイドで来る…!!
EVEN THOUGH IT LOOKS RELAXED, HIS MOVEMENTS AND THE BALL ARE INCREDIBLY FAST...
15

THIS GUY... HE'S REALLY UNBELIEVABLE...
BUT HE DOESN'T CHANGE BASED ON HIS OPPONENT LIKE NABAE-KUN. IT'S PURE TEXTBOOK STYLE.
THE REASON HE CAN DO THIS IS BECAUSE OF THE HIGH QUALITY OF HIS SHOTS AND HIS MOVEMENTS...
HE DOESN'T NEED ANY SPECIAL STYLES, WEAPONS, OR TRICKS...
HE DOESN'T SIMPLY RETURN THE SHOTS. HE'S SEEKING FOR A COMEBACK AT ALL TIMES
THAT WAS CLOSE... I THOUGHT IT WAS IN.

THAT'S TROUBLE-SOME... I CAN UNDER-STAND WHY OKADA LOST.
AND APPARENTLY HE DISSECTS HIS OPPONENT MORE AND MORE AS THE MATCH GOES BY...
THAT MEANS I WILL NEED TO STAY ALERT EVERY SECOND.
AS EXPECTED OF IKE-KUN'S RIVAL... HE'S GOT A VERY DIFFERENT SET OF TALENTS FROM ME.
BUT MATCHES AREN'T NECESSARILY DETERMINED BY ABILITIES OR TALENTS
REGARDLESS OF THE MEANS, THE ONE WHO ACCUMULATES THE MOST POINTS WINS!!

#215 RECURSION





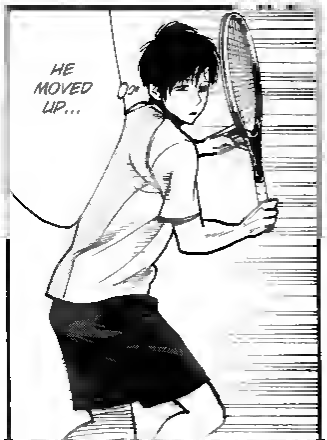
HIS REACTIONS ARE GOOD... HIS EYES MUST BE GOOD TOO.
RGH

I'LL DEAL WITH HIS HIGH QUALITY SHOTS BY PREDICTING HIS MOVES BASED ON DATA...
IF IT'S TEXBOOK STYLE, THEN THERE'S A HIGH CHANCE THAT HE WILL AIM FOR THE OPEN COURT...
FIU
!
CONTROL THE BALL SO IT CAN WIN THE POINT!!
AND AS I CHANGE THE PACE...

ネットプレー
その他
・ゆ1までトップジュー
・クリスチャン
・ボジオ1ガルバン1ル(左
• Body: Hard to ri
, To his feet when he's co
• Backhand: Since h
BASED ON MY DATA, I SHOULD ATTACK HIS BACKHAND.

THE RETURN'S SHALLOW...
ドゴ

ドゴ


HE MOVED UP...

BELIEVE IN MYSELF AND TAKE THE RISK!
ドゴ

RGH
ナイッツ
NICE ONE MARUO!
A LUCKY DROP SHOT...
YUP! THAT'S IT EIICHIROU.
30 - 15.

EVEN THOUGH I ATTACKED AFTER CRUMBLING HIS BALANCE... SHOULD I NOT GO FOR BACKHANDS?
ドキ
ドキ
ズン
ズン
NO... IT'S THE RESULT THAT MATTERS! IT'S ALL OKAY SINCE I SCORED!
REMEMBER, I WAS ABLE TO BEAT OKADA-KUN BY ACCUMULATING THESE SORTS OF POINTS...
FOR MY RETURNS, IF THE BALL COMES WITHIN MY DEFENSIVE RANGE, DON'T BE AFRAID TO SEND IT DEEP... TRY TO AIM FOR TIGHT SPOTS IF POSSIBLE.
ジュニアテニス大会
ドン

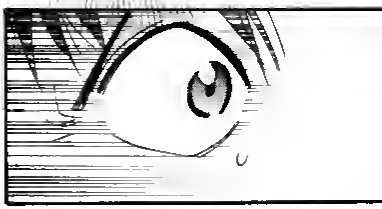
SINCE HE'S BEEN PLAYING FROM A YOUNG AGE, HE MUST HAVE BEEN USING BOTH HANDS IN THE PAST.
I SAW OGATA-KUN USE SOME TWO-HANDED BACKHANDS DURING THE INTER-HIGH AND YESTERDAY'S MATCH...
TWO-HANDED BACKHANDS HAVE A SHORTER RANGE BY ONE STEP, AND IT CAUSES MORE STRAIN ON YOUR WAIST.
BUT OGATA-KUN HAD A LONG ABSENCE DUE TO HIS HIP INJURY
IF THAT'S THE CASE, I'LL TARGET THAT BY CREATING AN OPEN COURT ON HIS BACKHAND SIDE...
THEREFORE IT'S QUITE LIKELY THAT THE SWITCH TO A ONE-HANDED BACKHAND HAPPENED RECENTLY
EVEN IF IT'S A BIT RISKY...

I'LL SLAM MY FULL POWER SHOT...
TO WHERE I'M MORE LIKELY TO SCORE!

WHA-
OUT.
30 - 30.
CONSIDERING THAT THIS IS MY RETURN GAME... IT'S NOT BAD AT ALL...
I think
THAT WAS DANGEROUS! BUT THAT WAS THE FIRST POINT I STOLE ACCORDING TO PLAN...
HE'S AIMING FOR MY BACK?
IT'S NOT LIKE I HAVE A WEAKNESS, BUT...
IT STARTLED ME WHEN THE BALL CHANGED ALL OF A SUDDEN...

RGH

HE'S COVERING HIS BACK-HAND...

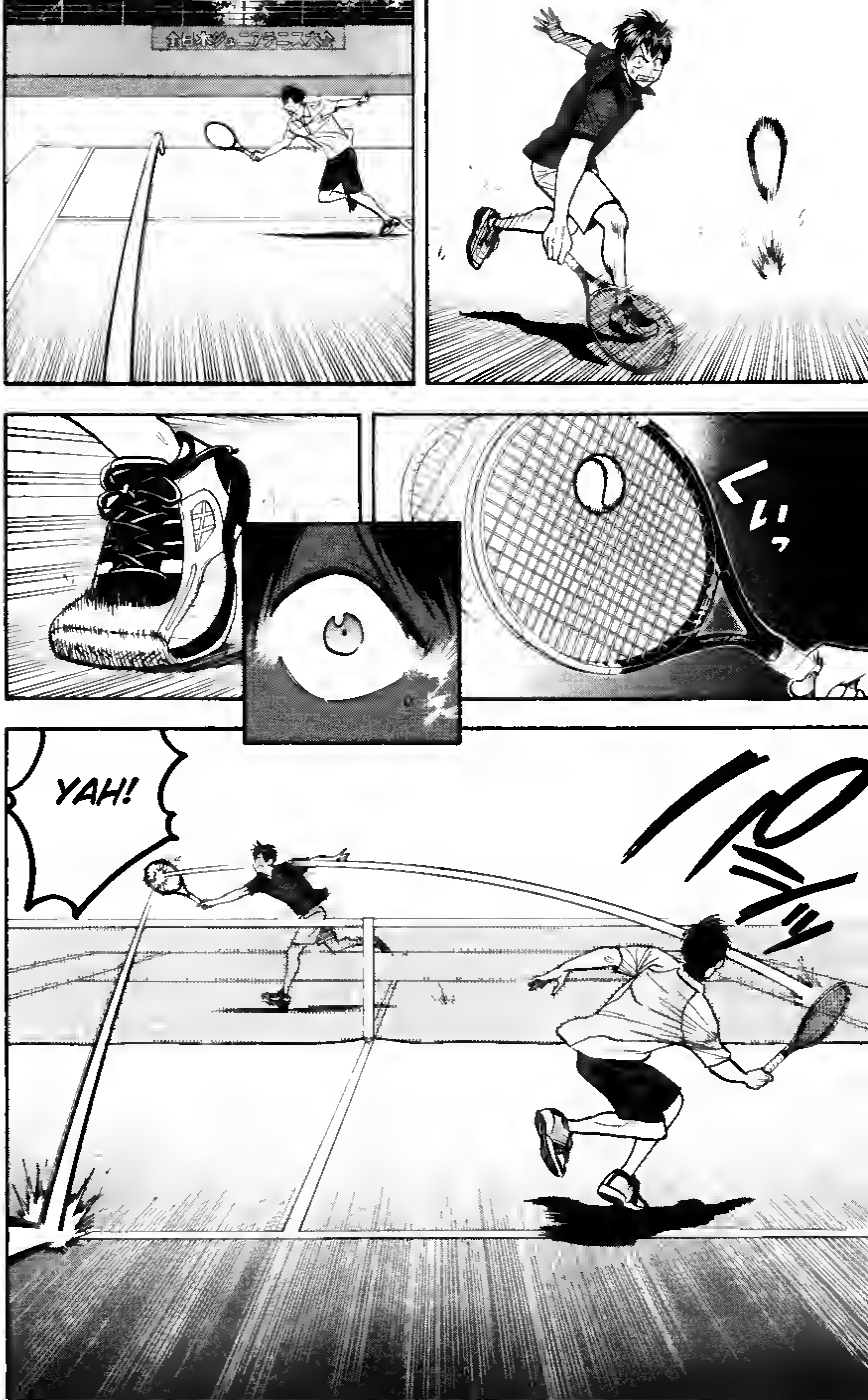


IT'S GOING TO BE DIFFICULT TO GET A BREAK CHANCE AGAINST HIM...
I WANT TO TAKE THIS POINT FOR SURE!!

AH... HE USED THAT AGAINST ME

HERE IT IS.
30 - 40.
YES!

DROP SHOT?!
THEN... A VOLLEY BATTLE!

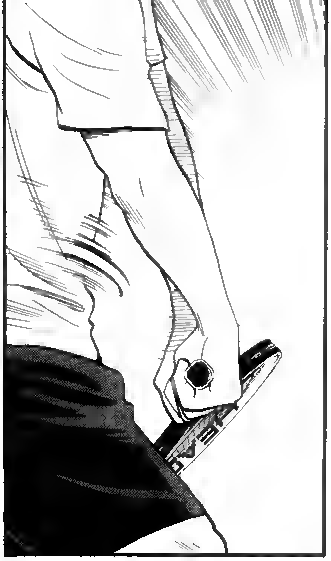

YAH!

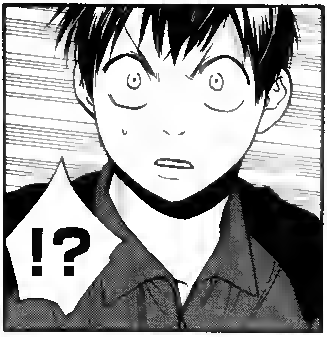
I NEED TO TAKE IT BACK...
EVERY SINGLE SHOT IS CAREFULLY CALCULATED...
HE'S GOOD... I'M HAVING TROUBLE GETTING USED TO THE GAP BETWEEN HIS BLAND LOOKS AND ELABORATE ATTACKS.
THINK OF ALL THE WORK I'VE DONE TO RECOVER IN TIME FOR THE ALL-JAPAN JUNIOR...
SHOOT... I'LL LOSE AT THIS RATE.
HE DOESN'T SEEM TO BE THAT BOTHERED BY ONE-HANDED BACKHANDS, BUT I SUCCEEDED IN USING IT AGAINST HIM.
SINCE I HAVE THE LEAD, HE WILL BE PLAYING MORE AGGRESSIVELY.
MAKING HIM THINK I'M TARGETING HIS BACK-HAND WAS SURPRISINGLY EFFECTIVE.
I'LL USE THAT HERE ALSO...

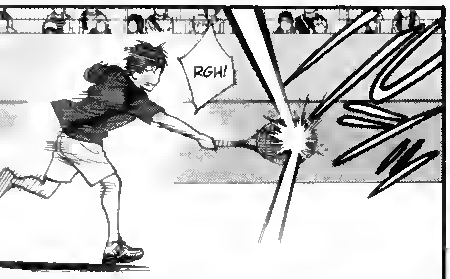
全日本ジュニアテニス大会
!?

A
TWO-HANDED
BACKHAND?!

Baby Steps







#216: ONE POINT BREAKTHROUGH

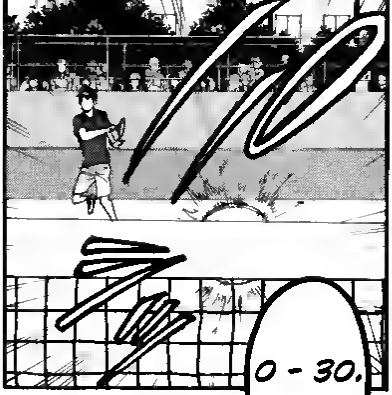
0 - 15.

... AND I FEEL LIKE I'LL BE REGRETTING A LOT IF I DON'T DO MY BEST ON THIS MATCH.
YUP, I'M FINE. BOTH MY DOCTOR AND THE TRAINER SAID OKAY.
H-HE SUDDENLY USED A TWO-HANDED BACKHAND..
THE TIMING AND THE BALL FEEL COMPLETELY DIFFERENT FROM ONE-HAND...

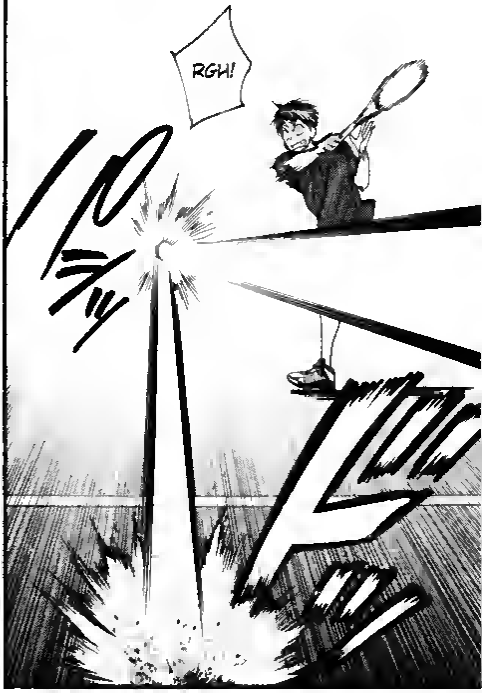
Two-handed Backhand
About one step
One-handed Backhand
I'M NOT FAMILIAR WITH HIS TWO-HANDED BACKHAND BECAUSE I DON'T HAVE A LOT OF DATA FROM HIS PAST.
IN THE FIRST PLACE, I'M THE ONE WHO BENEFITS FROM AN INCREASED ATTACK RANGE ..
WHY DID HE SUDDENLY USE TWO HANDS?
トン トン
DOES THIS MEAN HE'S GOING TO USE HIS ORIGINAL STYLE WITHOUT HOLDING BACK?
JUMPING TOP-SPIN TO OGATA-KUN'S BACKHAND!
HA
THE FACT THAT OGATA-KUN CHANGED HIS BACKHAND..
IS PROOF THAT I AM AT AN ADVANTAGE.
IF THAT'S THE CASE, I'LL USE THAT TO MY ADVANTAGE..

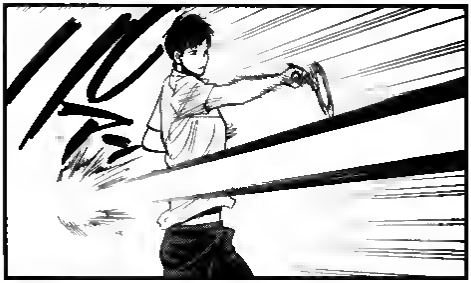
YES! I MADE HIM USE ONE-HAND!
I NEED TO BUY SOME TIME SO I CAN GET USED TO THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TWO...
BUT HIS ONE-HANDED BACKHANDS ARE PRETTY GOOD, TOO...
JUST AS I THOUGHT, HE WILL USE ONE-HAND IF HE CAN'T REACH IT WITH TWO HANDS.
SHOOT... HE POSITIONED HIMSELF FOR A FOREHAND!

IF ALL I CAN DO IS RETURN IT...
FLAT!
ドッ
NO MATTER HOW HARD HE IS CORNERED, HE ALWAYS RETURNS WITH SOME SORT OF A CHANGE ON THE BALL.
SINCE HE IS STILL STRONGER WITH TWO-HANDED BACKHANDS...
HE'S PLANNING ON USING BOTH HANDS WHEREVER POSSIBLE...

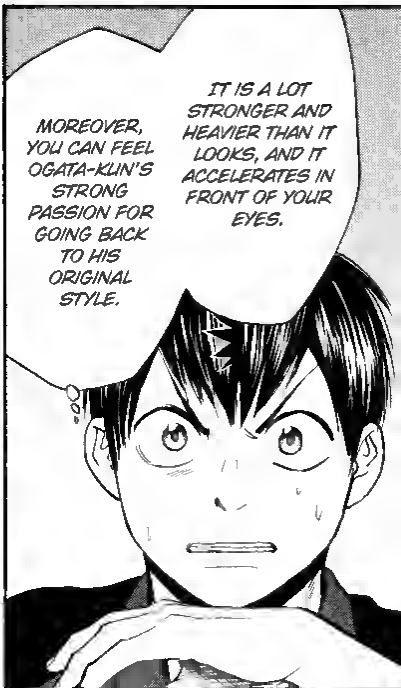

0 - 30.

CRAP... MY AIM WAS OFF BY ONE BALL.

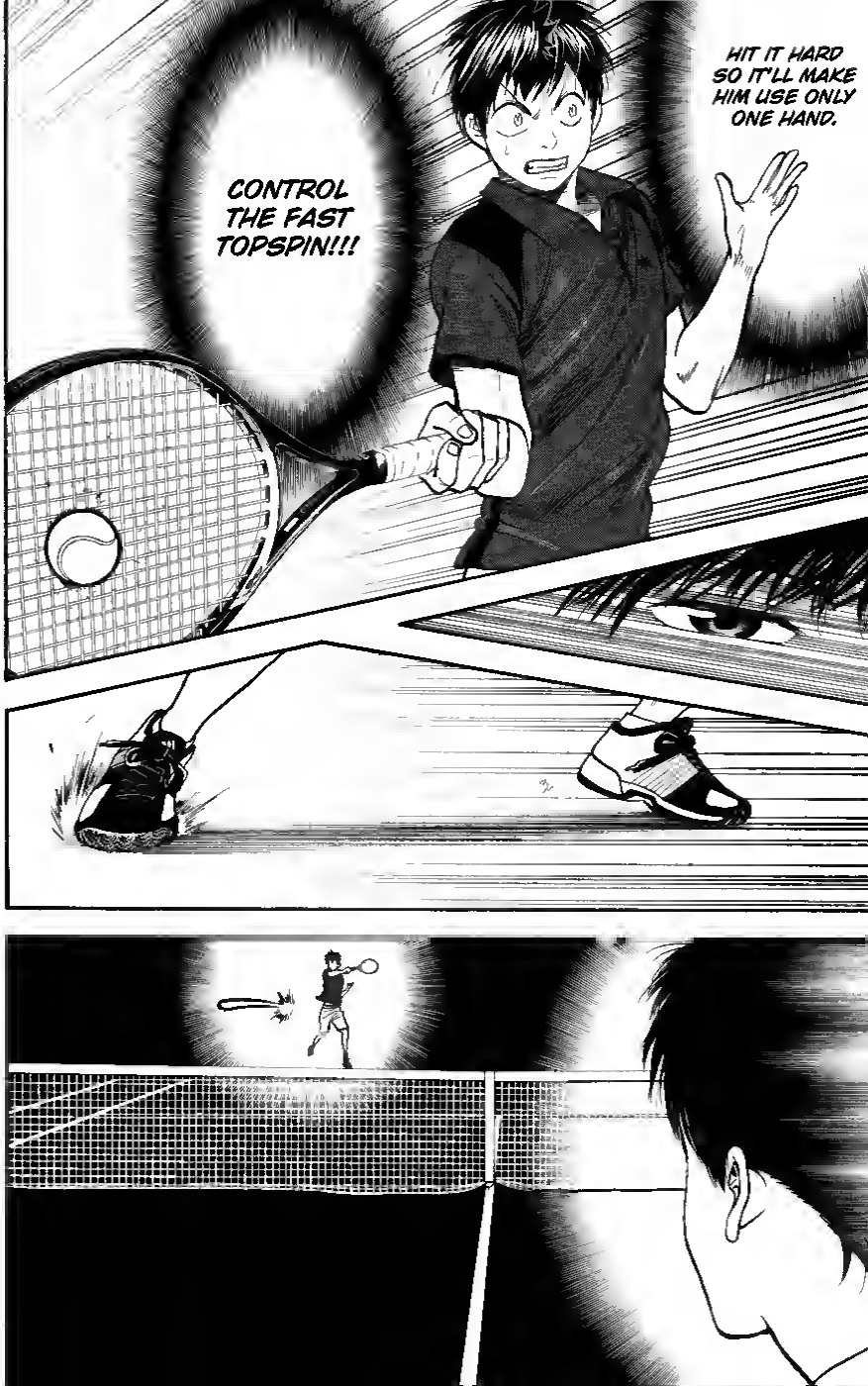

RGH!



IF THAT'S THE CASE...


IT IS A LOT STRONGER AND HEAVIER THAN IT LOOKS, AND IT ACCELERATES IN FRONT OF YOUR EYES.
MOREOVER, YOU CAN FEEL OGATA-KUN'S STRONG PASSION FOR GOING BACK TO HIS ORIGINAL STYLE.

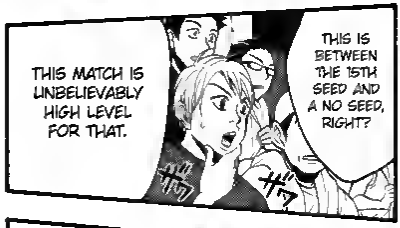
I'LL CONTROL A SHARP SLICE TO ESCAPE OUT OF HIS FOREHAND SIDE...
I CREATED AN OPEN COURT ON HIS BACKHAND...


HIT IT HARD SO IT'LL MAKE HIM USE ONLY ONE HAND.
CONTROL THE FAST TOPSPIN!!!

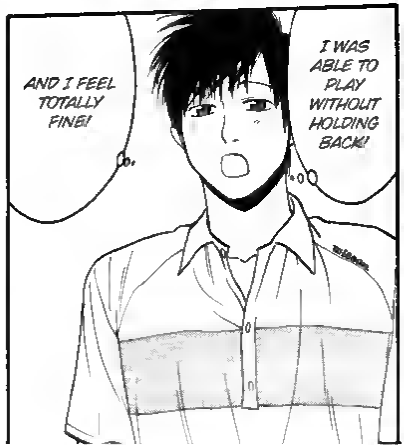
I STILL HAVE A HABIT OF TRYING TO CARE FOR MY WAIST, BUT... I CAN'T BE USING THAT AS AN EXCUSE...
I'M STARTING TO UNDERSTAND WHAT'S REALLY INCREDIBLE ABOUT MARUO-KUN.
WOW...
HE IS SELECTING HIS SHOTS SO I WON'T BE ABLE TO HIT A TWO-HANDED BACKHAND.
EACH AND EVERY ONE OF HIS SHOTS HAS A MEANING.
HERE I GO!
IF I DON'T MOVE, I CAN'T WIN...

AA
HE'S FAST!!!

AND WHAT A SHOT...
...WHAT FOOTWORK.


THIS MATCH IS UNBELIEVABLY HIGH LEVEL FOR THAT.
THIS IS BETWEEN THE 15TH SEED AND A NO SEED, RIGHT?

WELL, WHAT DO YOU EXPECT ..? IT'S A NATIONAL COMPETITION, YOU KNOW?
HEY, ISN'T HIS OPPONENT PRETTY STRONG?


AND I FEEL TOTALLY FINE!
I WAS ABLE TO PLAY WITHOUT HOLDING BACK!

0 - 40.
WOAAA AAH!!! AWESO ME!!!
MARUO'S GREAT TOO, BUT TODAY'S OGATA'S A KILLER!!!

THIS FEELING... IT'S SUPER FUN...
I FEEL LIKE I'M REALLY BACK...
ほっ
ほっ
ほっ
THEN WHAT SHOULD I DO ..?
BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN IT'S EASIER ON HIS FOREHAND, EITHER.
HIS TWO-HANDED BACKHAND IS A HUGE THREAT WHEN HE IS SERIOUS

ドッ
HA!
SHOOT, I SHOT TOO WIDE!!
OUT! GAME, OGATA. 2 - 1. MARUO LEADS.
YES! I IMMEDIATELY BROKE BACK!

AGAINST THAT FOOTWORK, IT'S EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TO HIT A SHOT THAT CAN ONLY BE RECEIVED WITH A ONE-HANDED BACKHAND.
カキ
カキ
カキ
カキ
カキ
SIMPLY AIMING LEADS TO THE TARGET BECOMING TOO SMALL,
AND MY FIELD OF VISION WAS GETTING TOO NARROW BY THE TIME I REALIZED IT.
HE IS WRITING SOMETHING... WHAT'S HE WRITING?
NO, NO. CALM DOWN...
IF SO.. I REALLY DON'T HAVE ANY OTHER OPTIONS TO ATTACK. .
I'VE BEEN TRAINING TO STAY CALM UNDER ANY CONDITION PRECISELY FOR TIMES LIKE THIS.
I NEED TO RELY ON THE BEST PLAN I CAN COME UP WITH AT THIS MOMENT

SET UP THE SHOTS UNTIL THEN WITH MORE CARE AND PERFECTION.
ALTHOUGH I AM GETTING CORNERED RIGHT NOW, I WAS THE ONE WHO HAD THE UPPER HAND BEFORE..
THERE'S A POSSIBILITY THAT I CAN TURN THE TIDE OF THE GAME IF I CAN BREAK THROUGH THIS.
IT DEPENDS ON THE RALLY BEFORE HE HITS THE BACKHAND...
THERE ARE STILL THINGS I CAN DO!
TIME!
PLAYER
I
II
III
MARUO EIICHIROU
2
OGATA KATSUMI
1
DUNLOP

TCH.
HA!
HIS SHOTS ARE EVEN FASTER IN HIS SERVE GAME!

HE STOPPED TARGETING MY BACK-HAND.
BUT IT'S STILL HARD TO GRASP HIS TIMING, SO I SHOULD TRY TO MAKE THIS SHORT..
全日本ジュニアテニス
ハッ
ア

#217 ACCEPTANCE
ジュニアテニス大会
15 - 0.
FAST ATTACK!
IT'S REALLY HARD TO COUNTER THIS FAST ATTACK WHEN OGATA-KUN'S FIRST SERVE LANDS IN PROPERLY...
IF I CARELESSLY TARGET HIS BACKHAND, THEN HE WILL COUNTER IT WITH THAT TWO-HANDED BACKHAND...
BUT IF I TRY TO FORCE HIM TO USE A ONE-HANDED BACKHAND, I'LL END UP MISSING...
はっ
アウト ゲーム者が2-1 3点リード
IF THAT'S THE CASE...

FIRST, DODGE HIS QUICK ATTACKS BY DRASTICALLY CUTTING DOWN THE PACE...
AH... OGATA-KUN MATCHED THE PACE.

NOW WHAT...? THIS SHOT'S TOO DEEP FOR ME TO FORCE HIM TO USE ONE-HANDED...
A DEEP SLICE TO HIS FORE-HAND SIDE
EVEN THAT WAS TOO WEAK?!!
ONE-SHOT KILL!?!

NOW WHAT...?
HE ISN'T BREAKING A SWEAT...
I THOUGHT I PULLED HIM INTO MY PACE FOR A MOMENT, BUT I WAS COMPLETELY WRONG...
HE MOVED BACK A BIT...

A HIGH-PACED GAME ON OGATA-KUN'S SERVICE GAME PUTS ME AT A DISADVANTAGE

IT'S TOTALLY DEFENSIVE. THIS MAKES IT HARDER TO SCORE
HOW ABOUT A REALLY SLOW PACE INSTEAD?
HA
OUT. 30 - 15.
CLOSE... BUT I WON.

HA
RGH
GAME, OGATA. 2 - 2.
SOMEHOW I GOT THE POINT, BUT HIS DEFENSE IS STRONG...

BUT I'LL MAKE USE OF THIS GAME ON MY SERVE...
EVEN IF I RADICALLY SLOW DOWN THE GAME, DEFENSE ALONE CAN'T TAKE DOWN AN OPPONENT OF HIS LEVEL...
IT'S INCREDIBLY HARD TO TAKE DOWN HIS SERVE GAMES, AS EXPECTED.
I MADE HIM MISS, BUT HE ENDED UP MAKING THEM ALL AND KEEP-ING...
2 - 2. TIE GOING IN TO GAME 5. IF I LOSE THIS, HE TAKES THE LEAD.
MAKE SURE TO AIM IT RIGHT
FIRST, A SHARP SLICE SERVE...

OKAY...
TURN THE DEFENSIVE FLOW THAT LASTED FOR AN ENTIRE GAME LAST TIME ..
INTO AN OFFENSIVE FLOW WITH ONE STROKE!!
WITH MY FASTEST FLAT...
CROSS!!!

!!
ONCE HIS RHYTHM IS SHATTERED, GO FOR A FINISH RIGHT AWAY.
IT'S SLIGHTLY SHALLOW!
IT'S EFFECTIVE
SINCE I'M COMPLETELY LOSING IN RETURN GAMES...
I CAN'T AFFORD TO LOSE THIS SERVICE GAME.
HE TURNED AROUND FOR A BACKHAND?

THEN MAKE USE OF THE SUPER SLOW GAME FROM BEFORE AND USE THE BEST CHANGE-OF-PACE I CAN RIGHT NOW...
CHANGING THE PACE ON THE LEVEL OF THE PREVIOUS SERVE GAME ISN'T GOOD ENOUGH...
I'LL FOCUS ALL THE STRENGTH I ACCUMULATED ON MY OPPONENT'S WEAKNESS!!
SHORT CROSS TO HIS ONE-HANDED BACKHAND!!!

CAN HE REACH IT?!
IT'S IN!!!

COME ON.
HE CAN REACH IT...
OKAY, I MADE HIM USE ONE HAND...
I NEVER TRIED A ONE-HANDED BACKHAND BEFORE...
I HAVE TO START EVERYTHING FROM THE GROUND UP. .
WHY AM I THE ONLY ONE WHO HAS TO SUFFER.
WHEN ALL I DID WAS TRAIN MY BEST ..?
YOU'RE RIGHT...
BUT YOU CAN DEFINITELY OVERCOME THIS.

BOTH ONE-HAND AND TWO-HAND BACKHANDS HAVE THEIR OWN STRENGTHS.
I SEE... IF I DIDN'T INJURE MYSELF LIKE THIS I WOULD HAVE NEVER IMAGINED PRACTICING ONE-HANDED BACKHANDS...
HP
ISN'T IT A GOOD THING?
AND... IF YOUR INJURY LEADS YOU TO TRY SOMETHING NEW,
... GOOD THING?
I WAS ABLE TO EARN THEM.
I WAS ABLE TO ACQUIRE BOTH...

0 - 15.

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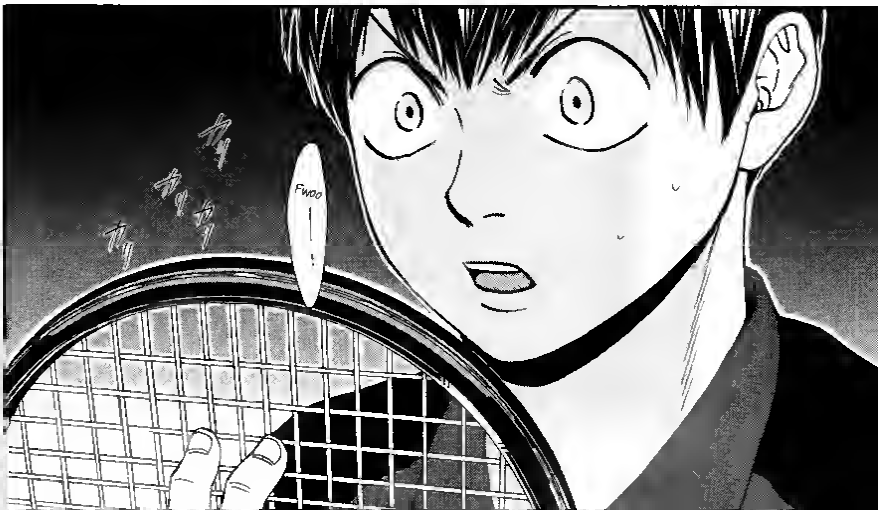
W-WHAT WAS THAT?! WHAT THE HECK JUST HAPPENED?!
HE CURVED IT IN FROM THE OUTSIDE WITH A SPIN!?
WOW!!! NO WONDER HE WAS COMPETING WITH IKE SOUJI!!
HE'S COMPLETELY BACK!
THAT WAS THE ONLY OPTION I HAD LEFT...
THAT WAS CLOSE...
I THOUGHT NABAE WOULD WIN THE TOURNAMENT,
BUT THERE COULD BE A HUGE UPSET!!!
IT'S FINALLY GETTING INTERESTING!!
...
IT WAS MY SERVE GAME
BUT HE RETURNED MY BEST SHOT WITH A WINNER...

NO, NO... THIS ISN'T IT.
THERE'S NO POINT IN BEING SO PESSIMISTIC.
HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO FIGHT NOW?
I PREPARED FOR THIS CHANGE-OF-PACE SO PERFECTLY, YET IT WAS RETURNED.

IN ORDER TO WIN... I NEED TO LEARN TO GIVE IN.
<Attack Points>
· Body Hard to react because he's big
· To his feet when he's at the net Since he's ta
Backhand Since he is switching to one-hand
IF I'M NOT GETTING MUCH FROM TARGETING HIS BACKHAND, THERE'S NO POINT IN CONTINUING.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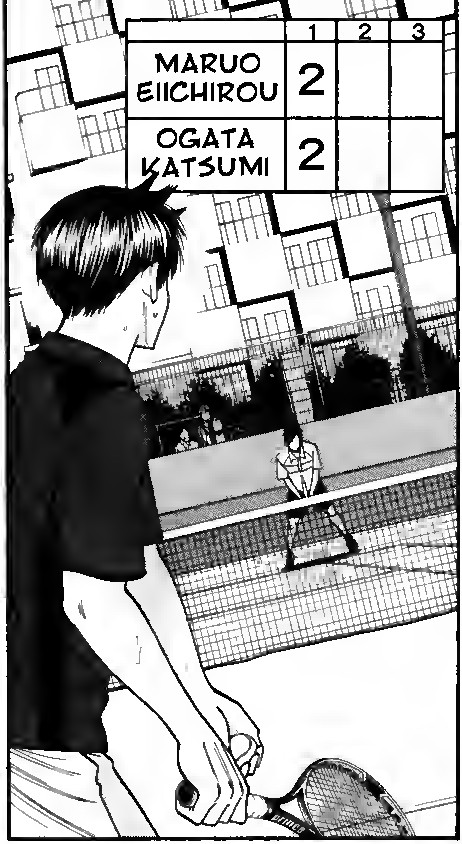
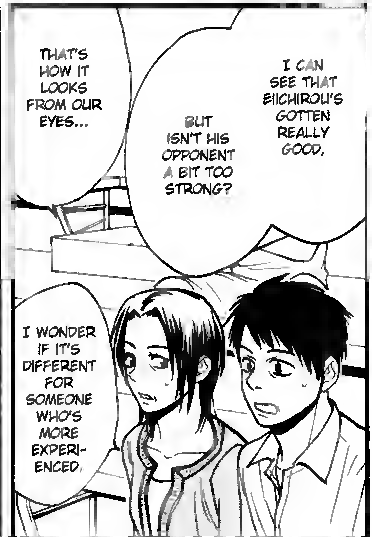
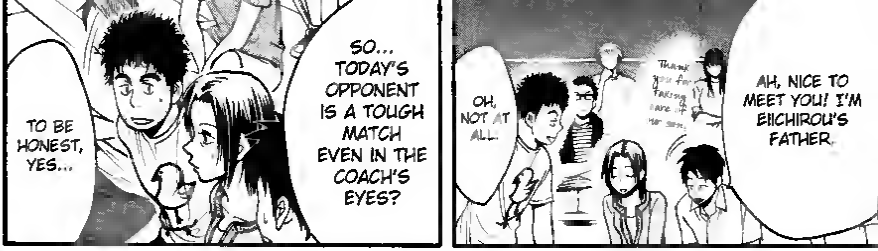
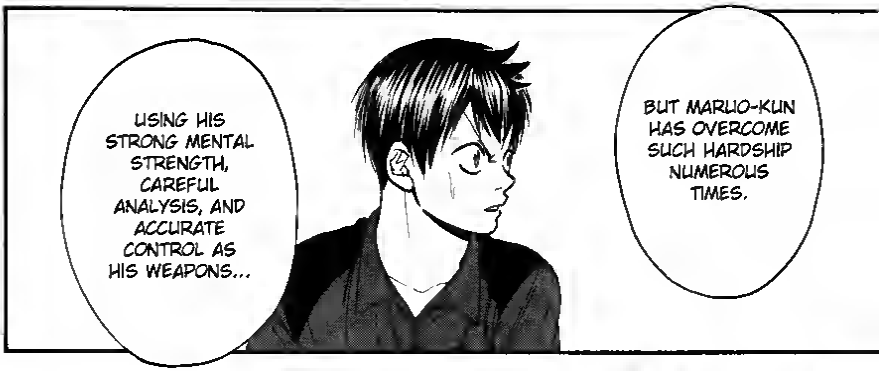
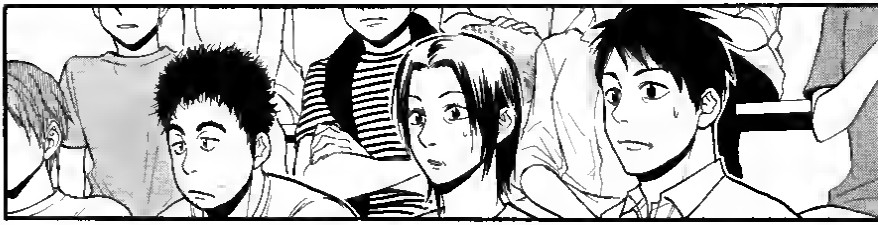


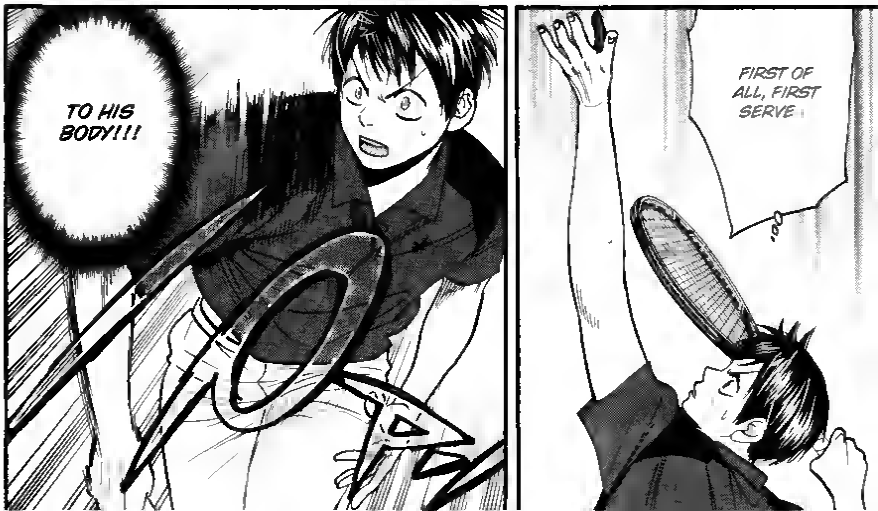
#218 IMPORTANT BATTLE


THAT'S HOW IT LOOKS FROM OUR EYES...
I CAN SEE THAT EIICHIROU'S GOTTEN REALLY GOOD.
BUT ISN'T HIS OPPONENT A BIT TOO STRONG?
I WONDER IF IT'S DIFFERENT FOR SOMEONE WHO'S MORE EXPERI-ENCED.


TO BE HONEST, YES...
SO... TODAY'S OPPONENT IS A TOUGH MATCH EVEN IN THE COACH'S EYES?
OH, NOT AT ALL.
AH, NICE TO MEET YOU! I'M EIICHIROU'S FATHER.


USING HIS STRONG MENTAL STRENGTH, CAREFUL ANALYSIS, AND ACCURATE CONTROL AS HIS WEAPONS...
BUT MARUO-KUN HAS OVERCOME SUCH HARDSHIP NUMEROUS TIMES.




TO HIS BODY!!!
FIRST OF ALL, FIRST SERVE!

・クリスチャン
<Attack Points>
HE RETURNS WITH ONE-HAND QUITE WELL FOR SHOTS THAT ARE EASIER TO HANDLE WITH ONE-HAND.

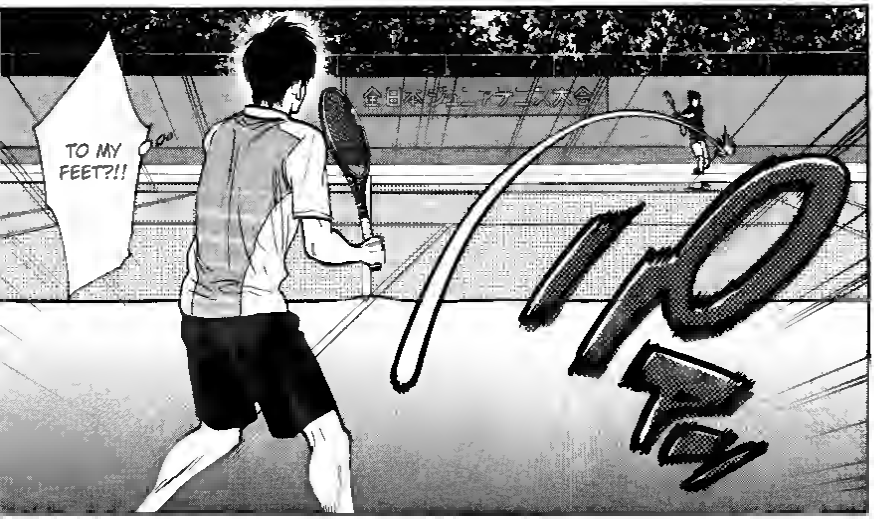
HE'S AT THE NET!
I CAN STILL DO THIS...
HIS REACTION IS QUICK...

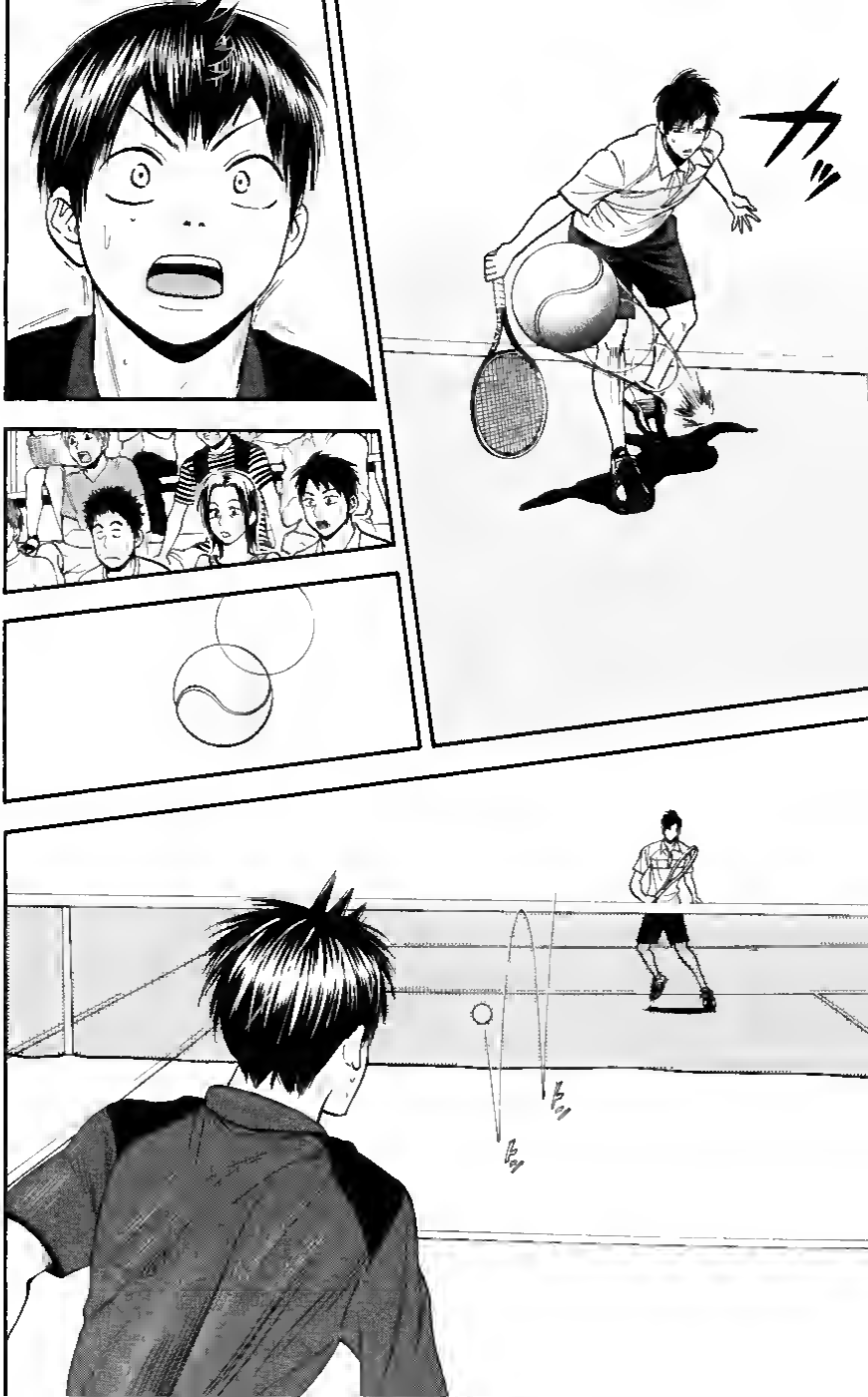
<Attack Points>

~~Backhand~~ Hard to react cause he's big?

To his feet when he's at the net since he's tall it's harder to return?

~~Backhand~~ since he is switching to one-hand




カッ
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0 - 30.
A HALF-VOLLEY DROP SHOT?!
WOOOAAH, SO SLICK!!
BUT IT STILL WASN'T ENOUGH...
I CON-TROLLED IT PERFECTLY TO HIS FEET...
I CAN DO THIS...
THE REASON I CAN PLAY SO WELL AGAINST AN OPPONENT OF THIS CALIBER...
IS BECAUSE I SURVIVED THROUGH SUCH HARD-SHIPS.

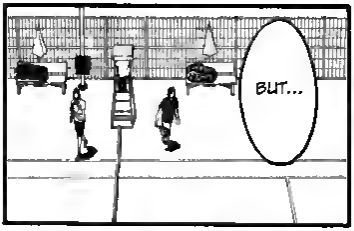
I AM ADVANCING FORWARD.
I DIDN'T SIMPLY COME BACK...
Wilson.
HE'S STRONG...
THIS IS THE FIRST TIME MY CHANGE-OF-PACE HAS BEEN DEFEATED SO PERFECTLY...
THEY'RE ALL GETTING COMPLETELY CRUSHED ONE BY ONE...
THE STRATEGIES I CREATED BY THROUGHLY ANALYZING MY DATA,
AND BECAUSE HIS STYLE IS ORTHODOX IT'S NOT LIKE I DON'T KNOW WHAT HE'S DOING...

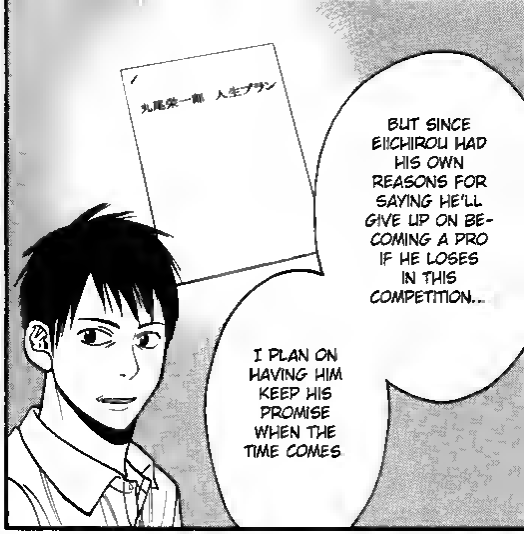
I DON'T KNOW WHAT MARUO-SAN THINKS, BUT...
I BELIEVE MARUO-KUN HAS THE SKILLS TO MAKE A LIVING AS A PROFESSIONAL TENNIS PLAYER.
BUT THIS PLAYER OGATA...
HAS THE SKILLS ENOUGH TO AIM FOR THE TOP OF THE WORLD.
JUST LIKE THAT IKE SOUJI, WHO IS CURRENTLY REIGNING AS THE STAR OF JAPAN.

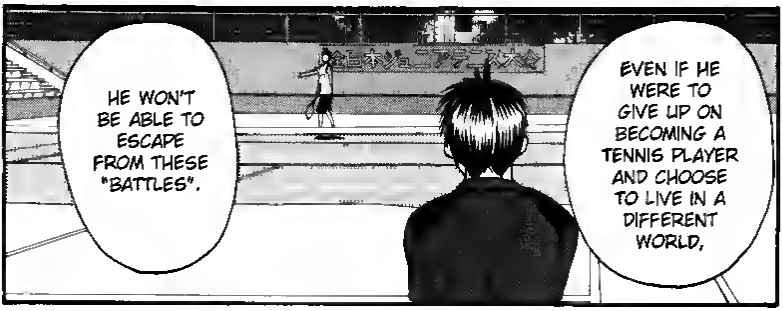
PLEASE CONSIDER THAT AS YOU WATCH THIS MATCH.
IF WE HAD A DIFFERENT DRAWING, THIS COULD HAVE BEEN THE FINALS...
GAME, OGATA. 3 - 2. OGATA LEADS.
GO, GO, MARUO!! YOU CAN STILL MAKE A COME-BACK!!
OGATA BREAKS AGAIN!! THE MATCH IS ON THE MOVE!

AT THIS POINT, THE THINGS I CAN DO IS VERY LIMITED...
I NEED TO TAKE AS MUCH RISK AS POSSIBLE FOR EVERY SHOT IN MY CHANGE-OF-PACE.
THERE HAVE BEEN TIMES WHEN BETTING ALL IN HELPED ME OVERCOME THE SITUATION...
AGAINST AN OPPONENT LIKE THIS, I HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO RISK EVERYTHING...
COACH AOI...
AS LONG AS IT'S BY EIICHIROU'S OWN WILL AND HE IS WILLING TO WORK HARD FOR IT...
I AM FINE WITH HIM DOING ANYTHING, WHETHER IT'S TENNIS OR NOT.
?!

That's Marsel's dad...


BUT...


丸尾栄一郎 人生プラン
I PLAN ON HAVING HIM KEEP HIS PROMISE WHEN THE TIME COMES.
BUT SINCE EIICHIROU HAD HIS OWN REASONS FOR SAYING HE'LL GIVE UP ON BECOMING A PRO IF HE LOSES IN THIS COMPETITION...


HE WON'T BE ABLE TO ESCAPE FROM THESE "BATTLES".
EVEN IF HE WERE TO GIVE UP ON BECOMING A TENNIS PLAYER AND CHOOSE TO LIVE IN A DIFFERENT WORLD,

UNDER CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES, IT COULD BE INJUSTICE OR UNFAIRNESS
IT COULD EVEN BE HIMSELF...

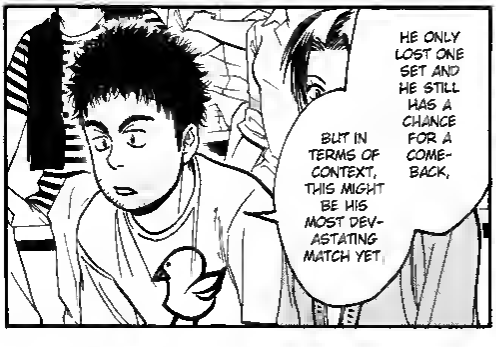
HIS OPPONENT COULD BE A RIVAL COMPANY OR A BUSINESS PARTNER.
IT COULD BE HIS BOSS, COLLEAGUES, OR SUBORDINATES...

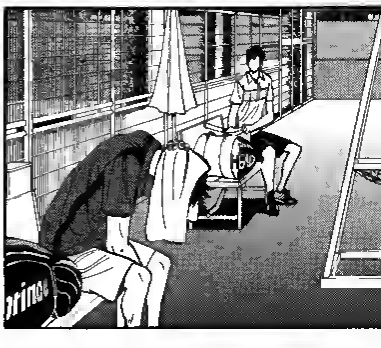
BUT EVEN IF THAT OPPONENT IS STRONG AND SEEMINGLY INVINCIBLE...
THERE ARE TIMES WHEN YOU HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO FACE IT.
MY SON IS HARDWORKING, BUT HE WAS RAISED QUITE PEACEFULLY.
I ALWAYS WANTED HIM TO HAVE SUCH AN EXPERIENCE BEFORE HE BECOMES AN ADULT.
I SEE.
SO I AM VERY GRATEFUL TO COACH AOI FOR INTRODUCING EIICHIROU TO SUCH A BATTLE.
NO, NOT AT ALL...
110

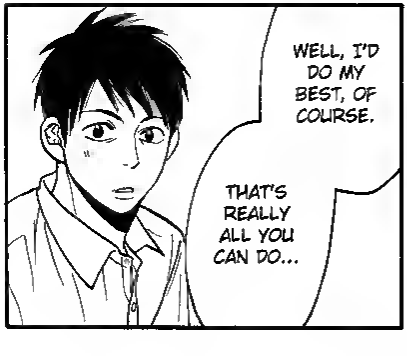
RGH
HA

FIRST SET WON BY OGATA.
COUNT 6 - 3.
PLAYER I II III
MARUO EIICHIROU 3
OGATA KATSUMI 6
DUNLOP
OGATA GOT THE SET!
THE TIDE OF THE GAME HAS COMPLETELY CHANGED!
IS THIS IT FOR MARUO?!
IT'S NO GOOD...

IF I RAISE THE RISK TOO MUCH, I MISS... PUSHING MY CHANGE-OF-PACE TO ITS LIMITS ISN'T WORKING...
NOTHING IS WORKING...
YOU CAN DO THIS MARUO!!! MAKE A COMEBACK IN THE NEXT SET!


HE ONLY LOST ONE SET AND HE STILL HAS A CHANCE FOR A COME-BACK,
BUT IN TERMS OF CONTEXT, THIS MIGHT BE HIS MOST DEV-ASTATING MATCH YET.




WELL, I'D DO MY BEST, OF COURSE.
THAT'S REALLY ALL YOU CAN DO...

BY THE WAY, MARUO-SAN, HOW WOULD YOU FIGHT AGAINST SUCH SEEMINGLY INVINCIBLE ENEMIES?

HMM... LET'S SEE.
WHAT IF EVEN THAT IS NOT ENOUGH?
I WILL HAVE TO TRY SOMETHING
THAT I HAVE NEVER TRIED BEFORE.
カッ
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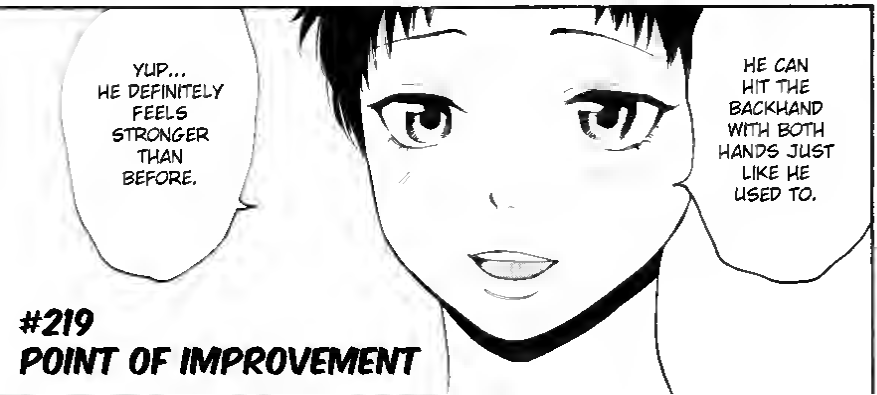
I SEE... THAT'S ONE THING FATHER AND SON HAVE IN COMMON.
カリカリカリカリカリ
カリカリカリ
TIME.

FIRST SET WON BY OGATA. COUNT: 6 - 3.
PLAY!
MARUO EIICHIROU 3
OGATA KATSUMI 6
OGATA-SAN! KATSUMI TOOK THE FIRST SET!
OGATA'S GIRLFRIEND
WATANABE RISA
YES... LOOKS LIKE HE'S DOING BETTER THAN USUAL.



#219 POINT OF IMPROVEMENT

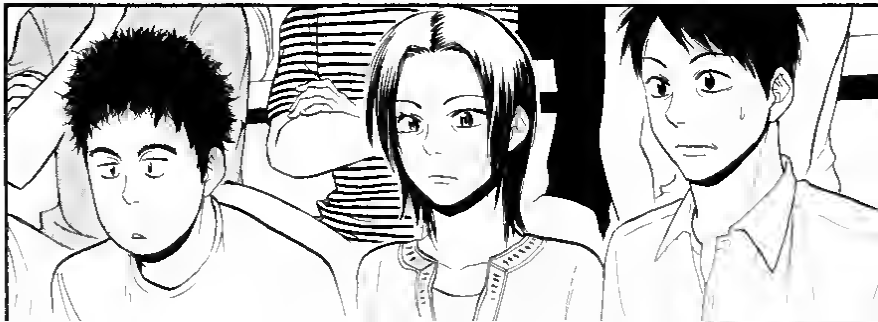
GO, GO, KATSUMI!!!
THERE WERE TIMES WHEN I THOUGHT "I CAN'T WIN" BEFORE
IT WAS MY FIRST MATCH AGAINST NABAE-KUN ..

HANDLE THESE SITUATIONS...
TIME!
"YOU-CAN-WIN!!!"
NAC-CHAN TAUGHT ME HOW TO...
I'LL DO ANYTHING THAT HAS THE SLIGHTEST CHANCE TO SUCCEED.
IF EVEN THAT'S NOT ENOUGH, I'LL TRY TO FIGHT WITH SOMETHING NEW!!!

SINCE I'VE BEEN USING CHANGE-OF-PACE, HOW ABOUT A REALLY SIMPLE PACE INSTEAD?!
RGH
NO IN RETURN GAMES IT JUST MAKES MY OPPONENT EASIER TO GET IN TO HIS RHYTHM

FIRST I NEED TO TAKE BACK CONTROL OF THE GAME
USING SOMETHING I'VE NEVER TRIED BEFORE...
GAME, OGATA. 1 - 0. SECOND SET.
...
I WANTED TO FIND A BREAK-THROUGH FROM MY RETURNS, BUT...
IT'S TOO HARD SINCE THE ACCURACY OF HIS FIRST SERVE IS SO HIGH

SECOND SET, 0 - 1... IF I CAN'T KEEP THE NEXT GAME, OGATA-KUN WILL GO ON A FULL OF-FENSIVE...
THIS IS IT...
IF I LOSE THIS.. IT'S THE END.
TIME.



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IF HE'S GOING TO DO SOME-THING, IT'LL BE HERE...
HA

NICE SERVE... BUT NOW WHAT?
RIGHT HERE...
GO!!

HA!

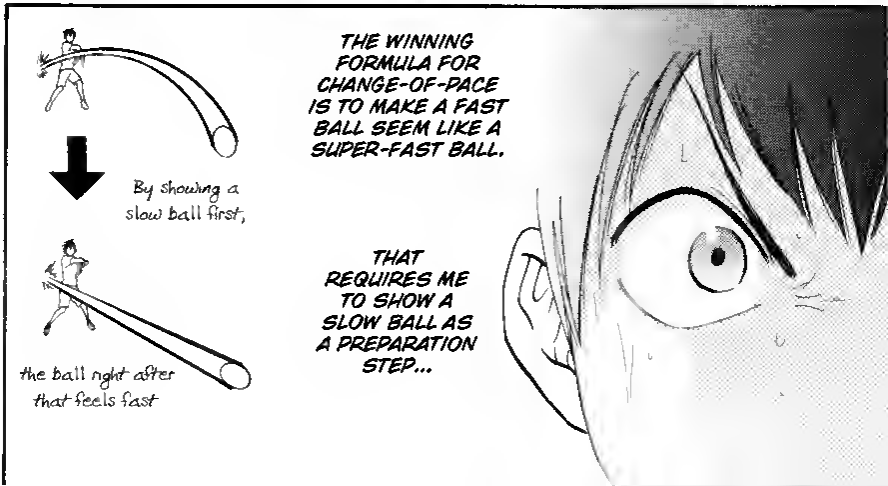
0-
OUT.
0 - 15.

HE CAN HIT SOMETHING LIKE THAT?

NO THE CONTACT POINT WAS OFF

OH!?
DID MARUO JUST TRY TO GO FOR A WINNER? THAT'S A RARE SIGHT.
HE TRIED A JUMP SHOT ALL OF A SUDDEN...

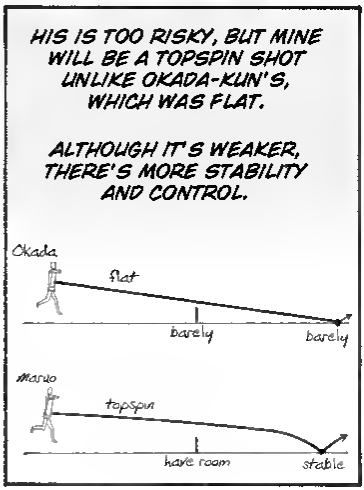
... BUT SINCE THE POINT OF CONTACT WAS HIGH, IT BECAME FAST ENOUGH TO GO FOR A WINNER.


By showing a slow ball first,
the ball right after that feels fast
THE WINNING FORMULA FOR CHANGE-OF-PACE IS TO MAKE A FAST BALL SEEM LIKE A SUPER-FAST BALL.
THAT REQUIRES ME TO SHOW A SLOW BALL AS A PREPARATION STEP...

THAT'S WHY I NEED A TRULY FAST SHOT THAT DOESN'T REQUIRE SUCH PREPARATION...
BUT AGAINST AN OPPONENT OF THIS LEVEL, IF I GET ATTACKED IN THAT PREPARATION STEP OR EVEN EARLIER...
Wilson

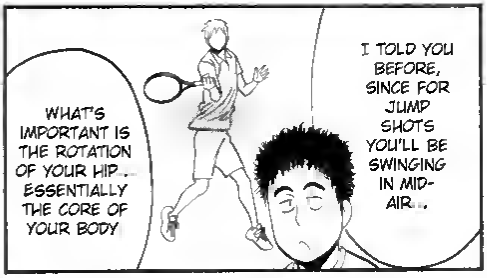
... THIS IS THAT JUMP SHOT!!
IT'S THE JUMP SHOT THAT OKADA-KUN'S BEEN USING...
... IF I WANT TO PHYSICALLY MAKE THE BALL FASTER, THE BEST WAY TO DO IT IS HIT IT FROM A HIGHER SPOT.

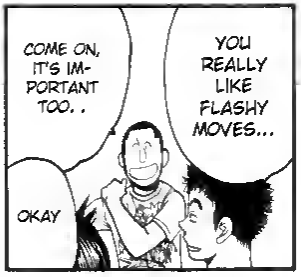
BUT IF I'M GOING TO LOSE, I HAVE TO DO IT.
IT'S A RISKY, SUPER-FAST SHOT I HAVEN'T USED IN A MATCH...


HIS IS TOO RISKY, BUT MINE WILL BE A TOPSPIN SHOT UNLIKE OKADA-KUN'S, WHICH WAS FLAT.
ALTHOUGH IT'S WEAKER, THERE'S MORE STABILITY AND CONTROL.
Okada
flat
barely
barely
Mario
topspin
have room
stable

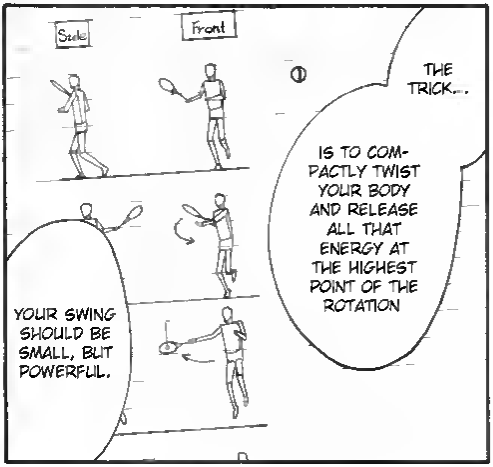
BUT I CAN'T BE USING IT ALL THE TIME. I NEED TO FIGURE OUT WHEN...
HA
THIS ONE IS TOO DEEP, SO NOT POSSIBLE
HOW ABOUT THIS? IT'S A BIT TOUGH, BUT CAN I DO IT?
I'M NOT TOO SURE, BUT I'LL LOSE AT THIS RATE, SO BEFORE THAT HAPPENS...

OKAY, WHAT WILL BE TODAY'S "FUN TRAINING"?
ME! ME! I WANT TO DO JUMP SHOTS!


I TOLD YOU BEFORE, SINCE FOR JUMP SHOTS YOU'LL BE SWINGING IN MID-AIR..
WHAT'S IMPORTANT IS THE ROTATION OF YOUR HIP.. ESSENTIALLY THE CORE OF YOUR BODY


YOU REALLY LIKE FLASHY MOVES...
COME ON, IT'S IM-PORTANT TOO..
OKAY

COMPACTLY TWIST...


Side
Front
THE TRICK...
IS TO COM-PACTLY TWIST YOUR BODY AND RELEASE ALL THAT ENERGY AT THE HIGHEST POINT OF THE ROTATION
YOUR SWING SHOULD BE SMALL, BUT POWERFUL.

THE OTHER THING THAT'S IMPORTANT IS YOUR GUTS.
YOU NEED TO BE FEAR-LESS!
HAH

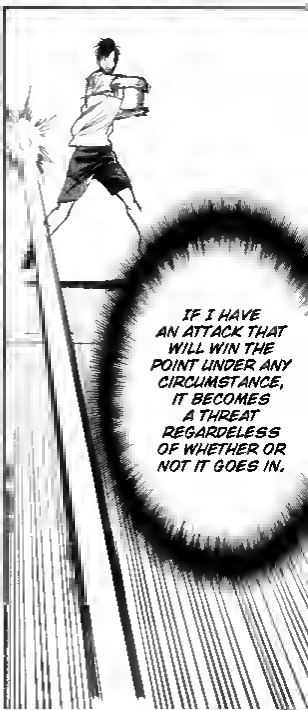
OUT.
0 - 30.

ANYWAY, I'VE GOT THE FIRE-POWER...
IT'S SUPER HIGH-RISK BUT IT SHOULD BE USEABLE IF IT WORKS.
SINCE I'M JUMPING AS I MOVE FORWARD, IT'S HARD TO MAKE PRECISE CONTACT, AND IT'S HARD TO CONTROL...
BUT IF I LOSE POWER BY FOCUSING TOO MUCH ON CONTACT, IT'S BACK TO SQUARE ONE.
CAN I MAINTAIN GOOD CONTROL WHILE KEEPING THE POWER LEVEL?
SHOOT...
NORMALLY, JUMP SHOT IS SOMETHING YOU USE WHEN YOU ARE AT AN ADVANTAGE.
I SHOULDN'T BE FORCING MYSELF LIKE THIS...
IT'S JUST LIKE YOU SAID, HE'S TRYING SOMETHING NEW.
CONTROL IS SUPPOSED TO BE MARUO'S WEAPON, YET HE'S BEEN MAKING A LOT OF BIG MISSES.
NO...
IS HE BEING DESPERATE?

THOSE SHOTS SEEM LIKE A BIG GAMBLE
BUT IT WILL BE TROUBLE-SOME IF THEY GO IN ..
THIS MAKES IT EVEN HARDER TO TRY IT.
A SLICE...
HE'S BEING CAUTIOUS ABOUT THE JUMP SHOT

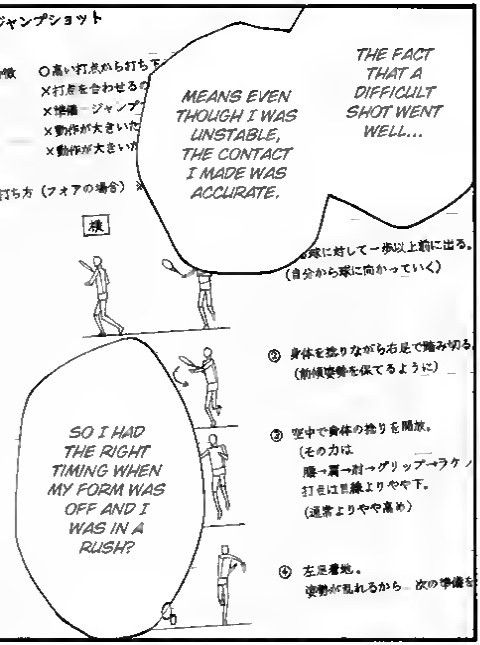
IN A TOP-LEVEL MATCH LIKE THIS,
MY TENNIS LACKS PHYSICAL FIRE-POWER.
FROM FIGHTING OKADA-KUN AND OGATA-KUN, I LEARNED..
THAT EVEN IF I HAVE INCREASED THE STRENGTH OF ALL MY STROKES,

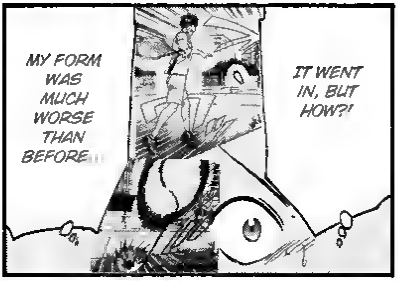
A ONE-SHOT TURNAROUND BECOMES POSSIBLE, AND IT HELPS ME BLUFF. IT CAN RESTRAIN MY OPPONENT FROM MAKING CERTAIN MOVES.
IF I WANT TO FIGHT ON THIS LEVEL, I ABSOLUTELY NEED MORE FIREPOWER!!!

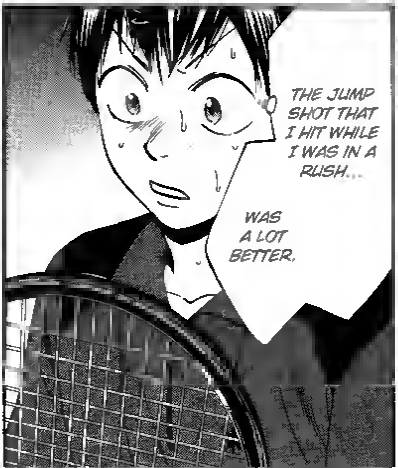

IF I HAVE AN ATTACK THAT WILL WIN THE POINT UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCE, IT BECOMES A THREAT REGARDELESS OF WHETHER OR NOT IT GOES IN.

WHETHER OR NOT THIS SHOT GOES IN...
HA
I NEED TO MAIN-TAIN THIS THREAT!

15 - 30.


ジャンプショット
打ち方（フォアの場合）
MEANS EVEN THOUGH I WAS UNSTABLE, THE CONTACT I MADE WAS ACCURATE,
THE FACT THAT A DIFFICULT SHOT WENT WELL...
SO I HAD THE RIGHT TIMING WHEN MY FORM WAS OFF AND I WAS IN A RUSH?





#220 PINPOINT

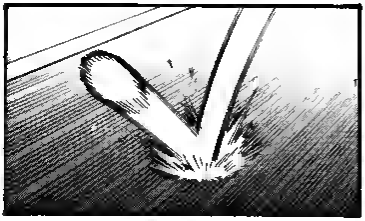
THE REASON I SUCCEEDED WAS BECAUSE IT WAS A FLAT, SO THE BALL'S SPEED DIDN'T DROP EVEN AFTER THE BOUNCE.
OGATA-KUN TRIED TO AVOID MY JUMP SHOT BY HITTING SHALLOW SHOTS.
IF THAT MADE ME HAVE THE RIGHT TIMING...
NO... IT'S NOT THE FORM.
IT'S THE SPEED OF MY SWING.
I WASN'T AS AFRAID OF MAKING A MISTAKE WHEN I HIT THAT SHOT...
THAT'S NOT ALL...
THEN THE SWING OF MY JUMP SHOT MUST BE A LOT FASTER THAN I THINK...
IN SHORT, I NEED TO TAKE THE FAST SWING INTO CONSIDERATION AND BE FEARLESS!

AND HE STARTED MAKING A GOOD SHOT. THIS IS A CRITICAL POINT.
HIS TENNIS HAS BEEN CHANGING EVER SINCE HE LOST THE SET...
IN ORDER TO FIGHT HIM, MAKING THE FIRST SERVE IS A MUST.
HA

ドッ
OUT.
30 - 30.
ホッ

I NEED TO ATTACK BEFORE HE DOES THAT..
I'LL GET OVERTAKEN IF I ASSUME I'LL BE ABLE TO PLAY BY MY RULES JUST BECEAUSE IT'S MY SERVICE GAME...
HE'S BETTING ON THIS GAME TOO..
CLOSE HE'S GOING FOR ME RIGHT WHEN I'M ABOUT TO MAKE A MOVE
IF IT GOES BEYOND THAT, THEN IT BECOMES IMPORTANT TO FIGURE OUT WHEN THE RIGHT MOMENT TO JUMP IS..
SO THE BEST OPTION IS RIGHT AFTER THE SERVE... IF THAT'S NOT POSSIBLE, THEN THE ONE RIGHT AFTER...
DEEP DOWN THE LINE!!
THIS ONE'S NO GOOD..

WHAT SHOULD I DO WITH THIS?
IT HAS A SLIGHT ARC, AND IT'S SLIGHTLY DEEP..



IF I'M GOING TO DO THIS THEN I NEED TO BE QUICK

IF I'M GOING TO ATTACK, GIVE IT MY ALL!!

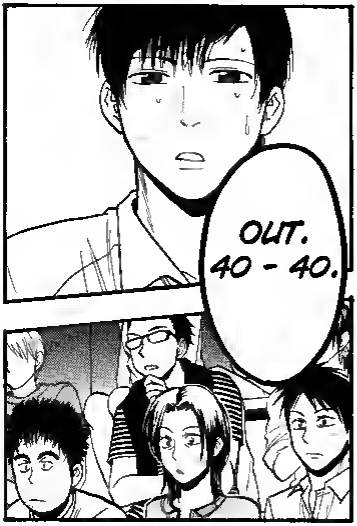
おお
WHOOAA!! DID YOU SEE THAT SHOT JUST NOW?!
YES.
おお
OUT. 30 - 40.
SO HE CAN COUNTER IT IF HE KNOWS IT'S COMING...
HE GOT ME... I WAS SET UP...
YES, KATSUMI!!! THIS IS IT!
IT'S BREAK POINT...
I ABSO-LUTELY CAN'T LOSE THIS POINT.

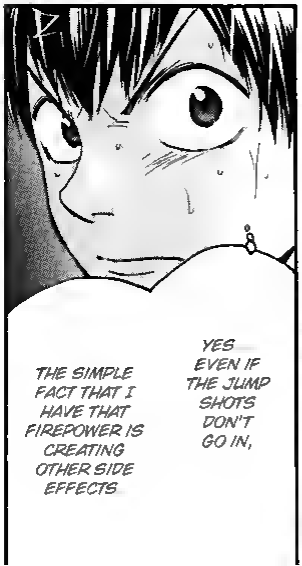
I'VE GOT NO CHOICE BUT TO DECIDE IT ON THE FLY!
FIF-TEEN SEC-ONDS.
HOW CAN I LEAD THE GAME TO A JUMP SHOT?
IF I CAN'T AFFORD TO RISK MY FIRST SERVE...
HE TOOK THE FLOW WITH JUST ONE RETURN...
RGH

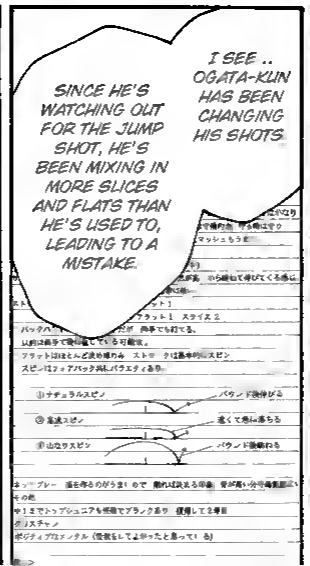
AT LEAST USE CHANGE-OF-PACE... A DEEP, STRONG TOP-SPIN.
A STRONG, DEEP FLAT... I CAN'T HIT A JUMP SHOT AGAINST THIS!
AN ANGLED SLICE
CRAP.. HE'S SLOWLY PUSHING ME TO A CORNER

SHOULD I JUST GO FOR IT EVEN IF MY FORM'S GOING TO BE WORSE?
BUT THAT'S TOO RECKLESS IN A BREAK POINT!!
SHOOT! HE'S TURNING AROUND ON A WEAK BALL.
HE'S GOING TO GO FOR IT!!

?!


OUT.
40 - 40.


THE SIMPLE FACT THAT I HAVE THAT FIREPOWER IS CREATING OTHER SIDE EFFECTS
YES EVEN IF THE JUMP SHOTS DON'T GO IN,


SINCE HE'S WATCHING OUT FOR THE JUMP SHOT, HE'S BEEN MIXING IN MORE SLICES AND FLATS THAN HE'S USED TO, LEADING TO A MISTAKE.
I SEE .. OGATA-KUN HAS BEEN CHANGING HIS SHOTS

A MISS?
I WAS JUST USING MY USUAL CHANGE-OF-PACE.

A DEUCE .. YES!!
HA

!
SERVICE DASH?!
HA

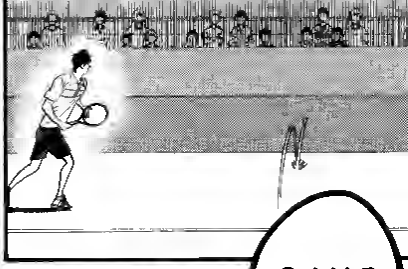
I USED OGATA-KUN'S STRATEGY TO AVOID THE JUMP SHOT BY HITTING DEEP AGAINST HIM!!
ADVANTAGE, MARUO!
YES!!!
OKAY!
ONE MORE AND I KEEP!!!
I NEED TO STOP HIM HERE... I DON'T WANT TO LET HIM KEEP.
HE'S ON A ROLL.

HE READ ME... WHAT A RETURN.
HA

HE'S PER-SISTENT
ARGH. IT'S ONE-SIDED...
SFX YIKES!
OPPOSITE TO THE OPEN COURT...!

BUT IF I CAN MAKE IT IN TIME...
HE CHANGED UP THE TEXTBOOK STYLE PROGRESSION AND IS GOING FOR A FINISH!
HAAA!
GO!!

#221 CRITICAL POINT



GAME, MARUO.

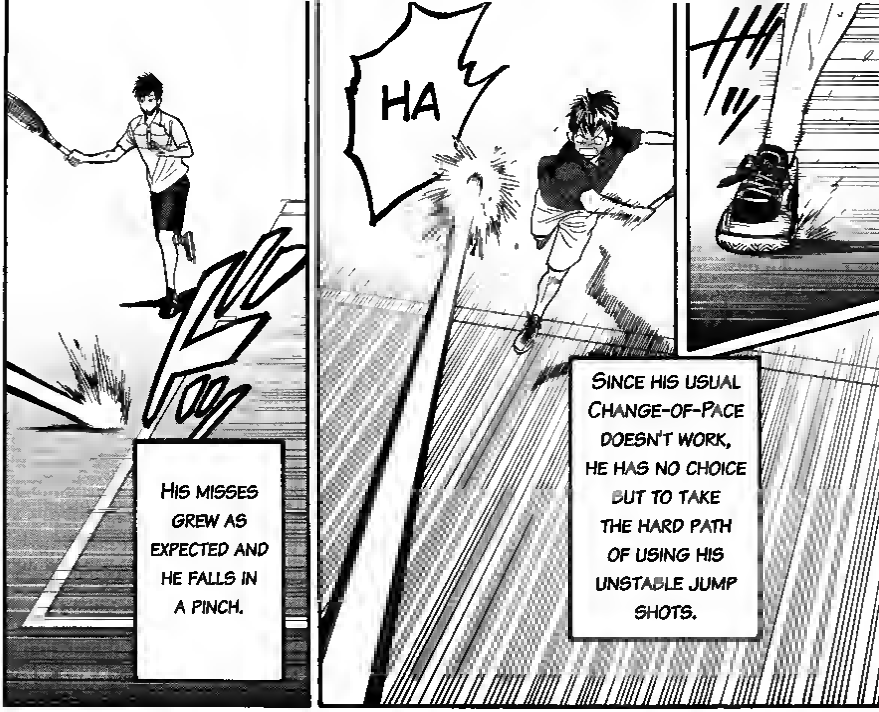
COUNT 1-1. SECOND SET.

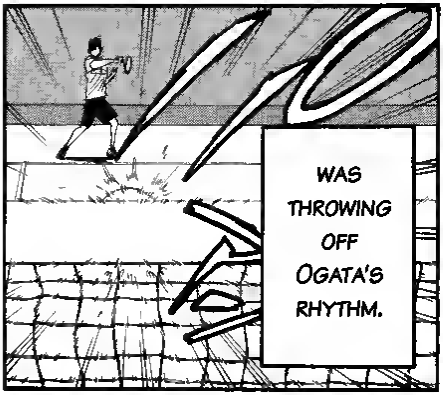
I... I MADE IT!

IT'S GOOD THAT I'M TAKING MY OPPONENT BY SURPRISE..
BUT SINCE THE JUMP SHOT ITSELF IS STILL UNSTABLE, IT DOESN'T CHANGE THE FACT THAT I'M IN A DIFFICULT SITUATION.
I GOT THE GAME!!
I MANAGED TO ESCAPE THE WORST SCENARIO THANKS TO THE JUMP SHOT...
I TRIED TO TAKE HIM OFF GUARD IN ORDER TO SCORE, BUT HE'S THE ONE WHO ENDED UP SCORING...
YES. EIICHIROU FINALLY GOT A POINT.
I NEED TO TRY SOME DIFFERENT THINGS TOO..
SO HE MADE A DECISION BECAUSE HE WAS CORNERED...

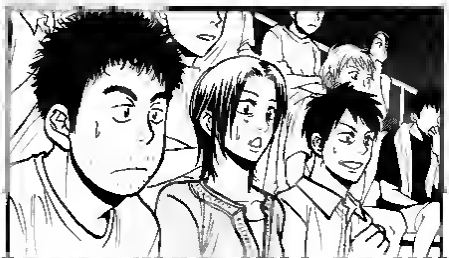
SECOND SET, GAME 3.
OGATA'S SERVE.
RGH
SINCE I HAVE NO PLACE TO RETREAT, I WANT TO FIND AN OPENING TO BREAK...
EIICHIROU BARELY HAD ANY ROOM TO TRY A JUMP SHOT.
AGAINST OGATA, WHO ATTACKS WITH HIS POWERFUL SERVE FOLLOWED BY AN ORTHODOX STYLE MIXED WITH SLIGHT TWEAKS AT CRITICAL MOMENTS,

Ogata manages a dominating keep as he casually preforms this high-level task.
He lures the opponent in and then chooses an unpredict-able form of attack.
Eiichirou's service game follows....
HA


HA
HIS MISSES GREW AS EXPECTED AND HE FALLS IN A PINCH.
SINCE HIS USUAL CHANGE-OF-PACE DOESN'T WORK, HE HAS NO CHOICE BUT TO TAKE THE HARD PATH OF USING HIS UNSTABLE JUMP SHOTS.


WAS THROWING OFF OGATA'S RHYTHM.

SHOOT... MY AIM WAS OFF CAUSE I WAS IN A RUSH.
I SHOULDN'T HAVE GONE FOR IT...



BUT AT THE SAME TIME, THIS STRANGELY AGRESSIVE SHOT...

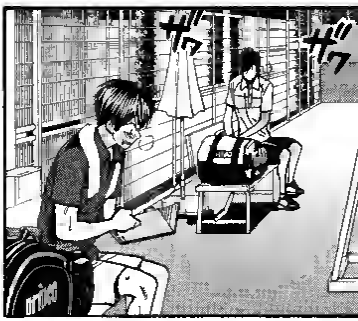
THEY REPEAT DEUCE A FEW TIMES...
GAME, MARUO. 2 - 2.
AND EIICHIROU MANAGES TO KEEP AFTER A TOUGH EXCHANGE.
YES!!
THE SUCCESS OF A JUMP SHOT IS DEPENDENT ON THE TIMING.
IF I CAN STRAIGHTEN THAT OUT...
NO, IF I CAN'T DO THAT THEN I DON'T KNOW WHEN I'LL GET BROKEN.
JUST ONE MORE STEP... I WANT TO BREAK AS SOON AS POSSIBLE...

From then on, Ogata dominates his service games with his great balance of power, technique, and tactics.
On the other hand, Eiichirou struggles as he tries to determine the right timing for his jump shots, but doesn't allow a break. Both players are engaged in a keeping battle.
Because Eiichirou was scoring fewer points, it seemed like he was the one losing...

And Ogata the one winning, but as long as they are both keeping their service game, it's a tie.
This seemingly unfair stalemate that can only be seen in tennis continued for seven games.

ダンロップ
全日本ジュニアテニス大会
Supported by N.SHINB
PLAYER
I
II
III
MARUO EIICHIROU
3
5
OGATA KATSUMI
6
6
DUNLOP
GAME 12, SECOND SET.
THE MATCH FINALLY ENTERED THE PHASE WHERE MARUO WILL LOSE IF HE ALLOWS A BREAK.

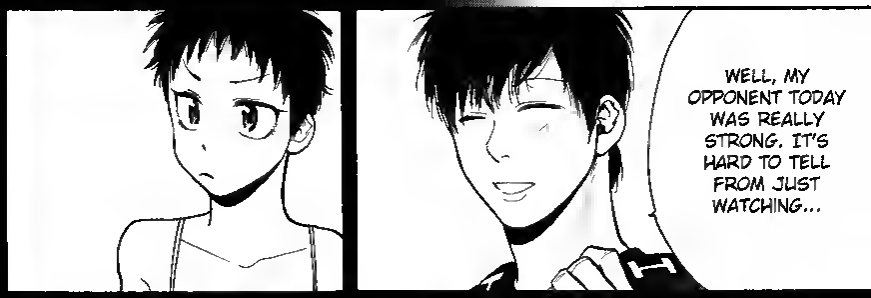
I THOUGHT THAT OGATA WOULD END UP BREAKING AT SOME POINT,
BUT MARUO'S HANGING ON PRETTY WELL.
SINCE HE MANAGED TO DRAG IT INTO A TIE-BREAKER, HE MIGHT END UP HAVING A CHANCE FOR A COMEBACK.



GO, GO, MARUO!!
PUT AN END TO THIS OGATA!
MARUO'S MATCHES ARE SO INTERESTING...

NORMALLY I SHOULD WAIT FOR AN OPPORTUNITY, BUT I HAVE NO TIME TO WAIT...
I STILL CAN'T DECIDE WHEN THE RIGHT TIME TO HIT A JUMP SHOT IS... EVEN WITH ALL THIS DATA.
I'M SOMEHOW DISRUPTING THE FLOW OF THE GAME WITH THE JUMP SHOT, BUT THIS ISN'T GOOD ENOUGH.
IF I DON'T CLEAR THIS UP THEN I CAN'T IMPROVE THE SITUATION...
SINCE IT'S IMPORTANT TO GO ALL-OUT WHEN I HIT...
THERE ARE TIMES WHEN RUSHING IT ENDS UP GOING WELL,
BUT THERE ARE ALSO TIMES WHEN HAVING SOME HEADROOM ISN'T GOOD ENOUGH, DEPENDING ON THE DEPTH OF THE BALL I'M HITTING OR MY OPPONENT'S POSITION, I CAN'T MISS OR EVEN GET OVERTURNED
BUT WHY CAN'T I BREAK?
I'M SO CLOSE...

SO CLOSE...
YOU WERE SO CLOSE TO WINNING...
YOU DEFINITELY SEEMED A LOT BETTER THAN YOUR OPPONENT


WELL, MY OPPONENT TODAY WAS REALLY STRONG. IT'S HARD TO TELL FROM JUST WATCHING...

YOU DON'T SEEM SO SAD ABOUT LOSING EVEN THOUGH YOU FINALLY RECOVERED.
HUH?
NAH, I AM SAD...
BUT IT'S TRUE THAT I'M JUST HAPPY BY THE FACT THAT I CAN PLAY TENNIS...

I'M A BIT WORRIED...
WORRIED?
I LIKE THAT SIDE OF KATSUMI, BUT...
I MEAN, YOU HAVEN'T WON ANY CLOSE MATCHES SINCE YOU RECOVERED, RIGHT?
DOESN'T THAT MEAN YOUR FIGHTING SPIRIT DISAPPEARED?
?!
D-DID I?
I'M BAD AT SPORTS, BUT DOING TRACK AND FIELD TAUGHT ME THAT...
THE ONE WHO WINS IN A REALLY CLOSE MATCH IS THE ONE WITH A STRONGER DESIRE TO WIN.
I THINK THAT KATSUMI LOST THAT DUE TO THE SENSE OF FULFILLMENT FROM OVERCOMING YOUR LONG INJURY...
WHAT SHOULD I DO?
HOW CAN I GET BACK MY FIGHTING SPIRIT?
HUH?

!
LET'S SEE... IF IT'S KATSUMI, THEN...
YOU NEED TO BE A TIGER!
CAREFULLY OBSERVE THE PREY, THEN AT THE RIGHT MOMENT YOU FINISH IT OFF WITH ONE BIG BITE!!! ROOAAAR!!!♡
T-TIGER?

I CAN REMEMBER IT CLEARLY RIGHT NOW...
THIS IS HOPE-LESS...
R-R OOO AAR R!!
SFX: STUPID...
AS A COMPETITION I PUT SO MUCH TIME AND EFFORT IN PREPARING FOR AFTER MY RECOVERY, I SHOULD KNOW HOW IMPORTANT THIS IS FOR MY FUTURE...
THE REASON I CAN'T BREAK EVEN THOUGH I HAVE CONTROL OF THE GAME IS BECAUSE I AM FALLING BEHIND IN MY FIGHTING SPIRIT, JUST LIKE RISA SAID.
TIME!
THIS IS A MOMENT WHEN I NEED TO BE A TIGER...

I'VE BEEN KEEPING SO FAR SO I ABSOLUTELY NEED TO KEEP THIS TOO!
TO DO THAT, I NEED THE JUMP SHOT...
I'LL START WITH MY MIND... IT'S ABOUT HOW MUCH I CAN SHAKE OFF THE FEAR OF ITS INSTABILITY AND GO ALL-IN...

IS THIS ALL I CAN DO?
STRONG PEOPLE WHO HAVE SOMETHING I DON'T HAVE... JUST LIKE NACCHAN...
SOMEONE ELSE... WHAT WOULD NABAE-KUN DO? HOW ABOUT ARAYA-KUN?
BUT THAT'S STILL NOT ENOUGH... WHAT ELSE IS THERE?
SOMETHING NEW THAT I HAVEN'T TRIED YET JUST LIKE THE JUMP SHOT...
CRAP... I CAN'T THINK OF ANYTHING.
!
NACCHAN?

TO BE CONTINUED IN VOLUME 24...

Baby Steps 23 Extra

Date

Hello, this is Katsuki.

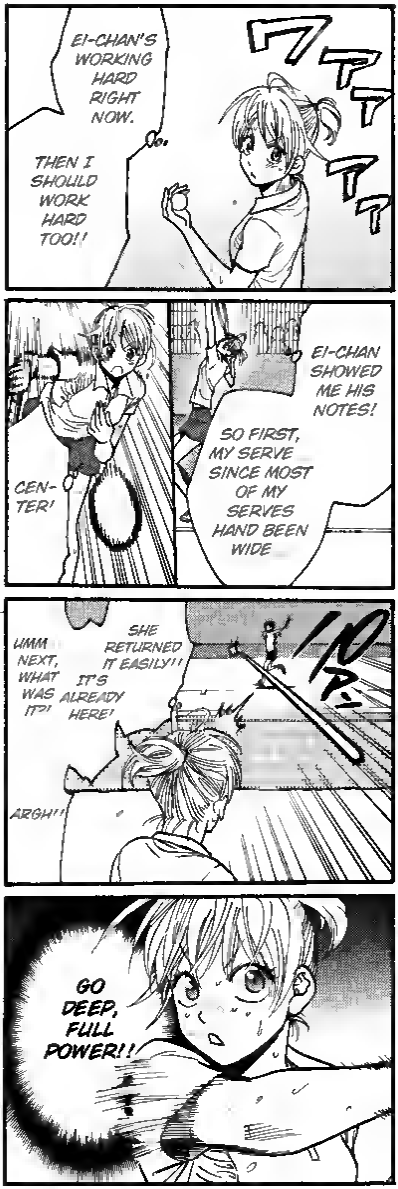
Thank you for picking up Volume 23.

We're finally starting the quarterfinals match with Ogata. Ogata's super strong for someone who got introduced mid-way. While I was busying him off of Araya and Okada, Mr. Editor told me to add in some "pretty boys," so he ended up looking like someone with all my definitions of a "pretty boy" jumbled up in one. But despite that, he's a bit dumb. By the time I got used to dealing with him, I was already on the next volume.

Anyway, the Ogata match is still incomplete. I will be working hard together with Ei-chan.

See you next time!

→ LIKE EI-CHAN... ←


EI-CHAN'S WORKING HARD RIGHT NOW.
THEN I SHOULD WORK HARD TOO!!
CEN-TER!
EI-CHAN SHOWED ME HIS NOTES!
SO FIRST, MY SERVE SINCE MOST OF MY SERVES HAND BEEN WIDE
UMM NEXT, WHAT WAS IT?!
SHE RETURNED IT EASILY!!
IT'S ALREADY HERE!
ARGH!!
GO DEEP, FULL POWER!!